THE PORTRAYAL OF THE BRITISH IN TRADITIONAL MALAY LITERATURE

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Indonesian and Malay Studies

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON
SCHOOL OF ORIENTAL AND AFRICAN STUDIES
2005

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the ways in which Malay authors portrayed the encounter with the British in a range of literary texts dating from the early seventeenth to the early twentieth century. The study draws on Todorov's conception of monologism and dialogism together with ideas of postcolonial theoreticians to analyse the nature of the encounter.

The main part of the thesis compares how certain phenomena, ideas and realities were comprehended and represented in traditional Malay literature prior to the arrival of the British, and how their understanding and representation changed or otherwise after the arrival of the British. The issues specifically discussed include the image of the world (chapter 3), concepts of justice (chapter 4), education and technology (chapter 5) and the portrayal of the individual (chapter 6). A close reading found that traditional conventions and formulae still predominated in the majority of texts portraying the British. Nonetheless, the traditional image of the world gradually changed over time, first incorporating British Bengal and then eventually the metropole itself. The understanding of justice and the attitude toward education and technology also underwent certain modifications. Even in the portrayal of individuals, albeit only British and not all of them at that, there appeared some features earlier unknown to traditional Malay literature.

The conclusion argues that, contrary to previous suggestions, there was no typical understanding of the British in traditional Malay literature, and Malay authors from different times, locations and social milieus reacted to the British presence in a variety of ways. While many authors proved unable to engage with the British 'other', some of their brothers-in-penmanship did enter into a dialogue with the new ideas and new phenomena of the life brought about by the coming of this 'other'. The findings of this thesis are subsequently used to shed further light on the issue of the transition from the traditional to the modern in Malay literature.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My initial interest in Indonesia came via prolonged stays in Bireuen, Aceh. My good friend Samsoel taught me most of what I know about Indonesia, and his brother Bang Gani worked with me on my Jawi. I am enriched by my friendship with Samsoel and proud to be counted as part of his Acehnese family.

I am fortunate to be surrounded at SOAS by good colleagues and friends who have offered support and advice of both a practical and an emotional nature, without which this thesis would not have been written. The Department of Southeast Asia at SOAS is a special place, and I am privileged to be part of it.

My first thanks go to my supervisor, Vladimir Braginsky. Not only has he been meticulous and challenging, but he has also proved to be constantly encouraging and supportive. I cannot think of a better individual to have introduced me to traditional literature and to have guided me through the process of writing this thesis.

Many people have shared their time in commenting on parts of this thesis, or in helping with the reading of manuscripts. I am particularly grateful to Annabel Gallop, Nicky Garsten, Rachel Harrison, Richard Murphy and Amina Yaqin. Discussions with Ulrich Kratz have always been useful and thought provoking. Sarah Hicks has remained a constant friend and morale booster when the process of writing this thesis has seemed like an endless one. The interest of Ian Brown, David Smyth, William Radice and Diana Flint has also been gratefully received.

I would not have been able to embark on this thesis if it had not been for the funding I received from the AHRB, which also contributed towards the cost of a visit to libraries in Indonesia and Malaysia. I am also grateful to SOAS as my employer for allowing me the opportunity to complete this thesis.

I have received only courtesy and genuine interest from staff in various libraries in the UK, Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia. In particular the assistance of

Che Puteh and her team at Perpustakaan Peringatan Zaaba, Universiti Malaya was valued and appreciated.

The interest of friends outside the field of Malay literature, has been vital to my continuation of this work. I am grateful to many for simply asking how my work was going, but particular thanks are due to Carolyn, Peter, Jane, Marcia and Breno.

A large part of this thesis was written in Rio de Janeiro. It was a marvellous city to write in, and Dona Marylene, Dona Otilia, Rômulo and Roberta are the best in-laws I could have.

A loving thank you goes to my family. My mum and dad are great parents. They have supported me in my various meanderings even if they privately considered them inadvisable. They have remained ever interested in my thesis, and I would never have been in the intellectual or financial position to get this far without them. Helen, my sister and good friend, has also been constantly positive in supporting my ambitions. Finally, my thanks go to Rogério, my partner and best friend, for his love and encouragement.

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SYMBOLS AND ABBREVIATIONS USED

< >	[angled bracket denotes an internet bibliographical resource]
Add.	Additional
BKI	Bijdragen tot de Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde.
BL	The British Library
BSOAS	Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies
Cod. Or	Codex Orientalis
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DBP	Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, Kuala Lumpur
EIC	East India Company
JMBRAS	Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
JSBRAS	Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society
KITLV	Koninklijk Instituut voor Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde, Leiden
MCP	Malay Concordance Project
MS, MSS	Manuscript(s)
n.d.	undated
Or.	Oriental
p., pp.	page(s)
PNM	Perpustakaan Negara Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur
PNRI	Perpustakaan Nasional Republik Indonesia, Jakarta
PPZ	Perpustakaan Peringatan Zaaba, Universiti Malaya
PUM	Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya
r.	reigned
RAS	Royal Asiatic Society, London
RIMA	Review of Indonesian and Malayan Affairs
RUL	Rijksuniversiteit te Leiden, Universiteitbibliotheek
SOAS	School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London
VOC	Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (the Dutch East India Company)
vol., vols.	volume(s)

INTRODUCTION

The subject of this study is the way in which a variety of Malay authors portrayed Britain and British individuals in their writings[1]. The encounters between British adventurers and seafarers and Malay speaking peoples that ensued from the earliest British voyages to the Malay world[2] in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were the first of myriad meetings between peoples from these two cultures. Details concerning many of those meetings over the centuries have long been forgotten. Some records will have been lost or perished, but the vast majority of meetings were never documented to begin with. Of the vast array of surviving papers that bear witness to these cross-cultural encounters, this thesis takes a particular group of texts as its source, in order to try to understand the Malays' perception of the British as manifested in their literature.

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[1] The term 'Britain' is commonly used today in place of the lengthy United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. For example, we refer to the British prime minister, rather than the prime minister of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. United Kingdom monarchs are described as being British monarchs. The term 'British' first came into wide use during the reign of James I of England (1603-25), VI of Scotland (1567-1625). The Act of Union (1707), saw the official creation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain, and in 1801, with the incorporatation of Ireland into the parliamentary system, this was enlarged into the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Following convention, the terms Britain and British have been used in preference to England and English throughout this thesis. It should be noted that the Malay writers studied in this thesis have generally not distinguished between England and Britain, between England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales, or between English, Scottish, Irish and Welsh etc. Rather they have tended to use the common term *Inggris / Inggeris,* and occasionally *Inglan* in all but a few notable exceptions.

[2] The scope of this thesis reaches well beyond the borders of the modern Southeast Asian state of Malaysia. Rather it is interested in literature that was written in an area commonly referred to as the Malay world. The Malay world should be seen as incorporating not just the Malay Peninsula, but also those regions of insular Southeast Asia, principally parts of Sumatra, Borneo and Java, where Malay was commonly spoken, at least as a language of trade and of the courts. As is well known, literature was recorded in manuscript form in the Malay language, albeit with some regional variations, in a wide variety of traditional states, including those that might not typically be seen as Malay. For example, the indigenous language of the coastal Acehnese is more closely related to the Chamic languages than it is to Malay (Daud and Durie, 1999: 1), but nonetheless the fact that much of Aceh's literary production has been written in the Malay language has led to its inclusion in this rather loose concept of the Malay world.

Aims, methodology and scope of the study

The main aim of this study[3] is to understand how Malay authors responded to the encounter with the British. Several specific aspects of the representation of the British will be investigated, in order to assess how different authors writing at different times portrayed the British in their literature. Van der Linden (1937) argued that Malay authors generally cast Europeans in their own image; with a few exceptions and peculiarities, they portrayed Europeans as if they were Malays. In order to explore this idea more fully, and to give a more nuanced understanding of this projection of Malayness onto Europeans, or in this case the British, the discussion in this study is firmly grounded in the conventions and ideals of traditional Malay literature. Each chapter, which explores a specific aspect of the portrayal of the British, first considers how the same theme is portrayed in traditional Malay literature generally[4]. Thus a key aim is to assess whether and how Malay authors departed from established literary conventions when introducing these foreigners into their texts.

The theoretical idea underpinning this study, which is discussed in depth in Chapter One, draws on the concept developed by Todorov (1992) of the encounter with the 'other'[5]. In his study Todorov argues that encounters between cultures can be monological or dialogical. If the encounter is dialogical it will involve interaction with, and reception of ideas from, the 'other' culture, whereas a monological

[3] Throughout this study the spelling of Malay texts has been adapted as much as possible to current Indonesian / Malaysian orthography. This is with the exception of primary texts originally published in Rumi script, in which case those authors' original spelling has been retained.

[4] Many traditional Malay texts are known to us today through manuscripts which were copied in the eighteenth or more likely the nineteenth century. Nonetheless we know that these texts often have their origin in earlier centuries, i.e. prior to the coming or at least at the dawn of the coming of the British. A comparison of *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat raja Pasai* does much to deepen our understanding of the life of these texts as they are copied. While the 1814 manuscript of *Hikayat raja Pasai* is much more recent that manuscripts of *Sejarah Melayu*, a comparison of the texts reveals that the former was quite clearly a source for the author of the latter. Thus while texts are edited or copied inaccurately, we can see that many of aspects of the texts, in terms of content, structure and value systems, do seem to have remained fairly constant since their probable date of composition (see Braginsky, 2005: 91-119 for a detailed exploration of these issues).

[5] While these theoretical ideas will be discussed in Chapter One, it is not the intention of the current author to try to structure the ensuing chapters in such a way that a certain theoretical framework be imposed on the material. Rather, Chapters Three to Six are arranged in a manner that allows the texts to speak for themselves, with theoretical ideas remaining in the background. The issue of whether and to what extent the textual evidence presented in the thesis confirms the theoretical conceptions mentioned above will be discussed in the conclusion.

encounter will be characterised by the 'self' trying to understand the 'other' in terms of one's own cultural norms. Thus in the monological encounter, rather than recognise difference, the 'other' is given meaning by having the norms of the 'self's culture imposed upon it.

The thesis will also consider how the ideas of postcolonial theoreticians can be useful for understanding the texts in question. All of the texts in this thesis pre-date both Malaysian and Indonesian independence, and the majority pre-date the period of early nationalist movements which are generally seen as having formed in the early part of the twentieth century. It has been suggested that a postcolonial approach to texts becomes valid as soon as texts exhibit a response to colonising powers (Ashcroft et al., 1989: 1). A key question asked in this thesis, drawing on Fanon (1961), is whether early glimmers of resistance to the foreign colonising power are evident in these texts, and if so how is such resistance expressed?

The first chapter of this study will set out the historical background, consider relevant scholarship to date, and relevant theoretical contexts. An outline of the chronology of British involvement in the Malay world until the early twentieth century will develop the historical context. As well as key events, the administrative system of the East India Company (EIC) and the British Empire as it related to the Malay world will be sketched. The assessment of existing scholarship will consider academic writing to date that has touched on the portrayal of the British, or more commonly Europeans, in traditional Malay literature. Finally theoretical considerations will be deliberated upon, first by discussing Todorov's arguments on dialogism, and secondly by considering appropriate aspects of postcolonial thinking.

The second chapter is devoted to the sources for this study. Texts will be divided into those that give only fleeting mention of Britain or the British, and those giving more detailed portrayals. Relevant texts will be categorised into appropriate groups, depending on their subject matter. Each work will be briefly described, noting pertinent details such as authorship, date and location of writing, details of key events involving the British mentioned in the texts, information regarding editions and scholarship pertaining to the work.

Each of the remaining four chapters will consider a certain aspect of the literary representation of Britain or the British. Chapter Three contrasts the view of the world presented in Malay literary texts prior to the arrival of the British with those texts which include Britain and the British within their narratives. In particular the chapter will assess the position of the Malay states in the world as they imagined it, on the eve of the European arrival in the region. On the basis of this picture, changes and developments will be examined concerning how the literary imagination of the world was changed by the encounter with the British, who as we shall see, hailed from beyond the limits of the traditional Malay world-view.

The fourth chapter is concerned with ideas of justice. In the first part of the discussion, Malay ideas of justice will be explored in order to understand how concepts of justice are portrayed in traditional texts. Following on from this, texts that throw light on Malay understandings of justice under the British will be discussed. In particular the discussion will examine to what extent British ideas of justice are seen to be a continuation of concepts of justice already familiar to Malay writers, or whether the British presence is seen to bring new ideas which underpin their attitude to the implementation of justice in the Malay world.

The fifth chapter will look at two related issues: technology and education. This chapter will investigate how concepts of education are portrayed in traditional literature. By drawing on a wide variety of fantastic adventure, historical and Sufi texts, a relatively full picture of notions of learning and the role of education in traditional Malay society can be established. On the basis of this picture, the portrayal of British educational ideas will be explored as they are revealed in a number of Malay texts. Related to the idea of education and learning is the idea of innovation and technology. This chapter will also examine some of the ways in which remarkable and extraordinary machines and devices were represented in traditional literature, before looking at how the new technologies brought to the Malay world by the British were incorporated into Malay texts.

The sixth and final chapter will focus on the portrayal of the individual. Drawing on a variety of sources, and focusing particularly on images of the ruler, the formulaic and conventionalised nature of individual portraiture in traditional Malay literature will be addressed. Then, turning attention to the portrayal of the British, categories of individuals and their particular characteristics will be examined, as they are represented generally, before finally examining how four British individuals in particular are portrayed by a variety of Malay authors.

The conclusion will pull together the main ideas of continuity and change that are found through the comparative analysis of texts portraying the British with the wider corpus of traditional Malay literature. In particular the concepts of monologue and dialogue will be used in order to determine themes and commonalities in the way a variety of authors incorporated the British into their narratives. Using the ideas of postcolonialism, evidence of resistance to the British will also be examined. Finally the thesis will consider the light that this research can throw on discussions concerning the concept of the transition from the traditional to the modern in Malay literature. The encounter with Europeans is generally seen as being a vital stimulus in spurring the development of modern literature in Asia. The question to be posed is to what extent the interest of Malay writers in Britain and the British can be seen as running alongside the introduction of literary elements that are either modern or might be perceived as stepping-stones towards modernity.

Thus the original scholarship contained in this thesis has several aspects. Firstly, the thesis brings together for the first time a corpus of texts that portray the British in some way or another. Included in this corpus are, among others, a number of texts that have previously received minimal or no scholarly attention at all (the jubilee texts, *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* and *Syair Inggeris menyerang kota*). Secondly, van der Linden (1937) examined a more general topic of the portrayal of Europeans in Malay literature. He used some, but by no means all the texts discussed in this thesis and, what is even more important, his work lacked a theoretical framework and therefore his conclusions were limited. The current thesis, on the contrary, will be more particular in its approach. On the one hand, the thesis will contextualise findings by making systematic comparisons with themes and values

evident in Malay literature prior to the arrival of the British in the region. On the other hand, the thesis will pay considerable attention to theoretical problems. The thesis will consider the usefulness of a postcolonial approach to traditional Malay literature[6] in order to demonstrate that the study of texts written by indigenous authors in indigenous languages are an indispensable source of research if a full and truly representative understanding of cultural production during the colonial period is to be reached. In addition, some ideas of Said (1978) will also be taken into account. Said raised important issues concerning colonial discourse and the way in which the West perceives the East (Orient). His arguments have rightfully had a profound effect on Western scholars engaging with the languages and cultures of the East. However, it is important to consider that Eastern understandings of the West may also be compromised by certain key cultural preconceptions. The perception of the 'other' is just as worthy of study when the 'other' is the West as it is when the 'other' is a colonised people, however only recently has the topic received concerted attention from Southeast Asian scholars[7]. Thus in reversing the gaze so as to examine Malay literary portrayals of the British, this thesis will represent a significant contribution not only to the field of Malay studies, but also to the study of Asian literatures generally.

The traditional and the modern

The terms 'traditional' and 'modern' will occur frequently in this thesis, in particular the term 'traditional'. Scholars who are working on literature from Indonesia and the Malay world commonly use both terms. However, the ease with which these terms are used is inversely proportional to their ease of definition. Thus, it is necessary to give a description of the current author's understanding of these two terms, particularly those aspects of the traditional and the modern that are directly relevant to the study at hand. This thesis is very much concerned with continuity and

[6] The paucity of works using this approach in the study of Malay and Indonesian literatures is discussed in Chapter One.

[7] In particular the current author has in mind the research project 'The ambiguous allure of the West in Thailand', led by Dr Rachel Harrison (SOAS) and Dr Peter Jackson (ANU), and the panel 'Looking inwards, looking outwards: Southeast Asians about themselves, their neighbours and the world beyond Southeast Asia', convened by the current author and Professor Vladimir Braginsky (SOAS) at EUROSEAS 2004 in Paris.

change. The study deals with assessing which elements and conventions of traditional literature remain when portraying the British 'other', and to what extent these portrayals reveal literary change. When considering a certain change or novelty, the question to be asked is whether that novelty represents a shift towards modernity, or whether, although perhaps new, it should still be seen as inherently traditional.

'Traditional' and 'modern' are best understood as opposites. However there are a whole variety of features that make one text traditional and another text modern. When defining these two terms we are working with ideal types. Inevitably in reality, things are rarely so clear-cut, and while some texts may fall easily into one of the two categories, other texts will contain a variety of features, some obviously more modern or traditional than others. Nonetheless the model of opposites, even if imperfect, is indispensable as a basis for assessing degrees of continuation and development.

When discussing traditional and modern features with respect to literature, and in particular literary development in the Malay world, we can talk about internal and external aspects of literature. The external aspect of this model is the mode of literary production. While written traditional literature is basically the literature of manuscripts, modern literature is the literature of the printed book. However, it should be noted that early printing in the Malay world used two techniques, typography and lithography. Whereas typographical printing can generally be seen as modern, lithography, which on a simple level can be understood as the manuscript in print, has many more traditional elements, and is therefore often connected with the initial uptake of modern methods of production (Proudfoot, 1993)[8].

This shift from manuscript to print carries certain key implications[9]. Firstly, with printing, books became cheaper, and their production faster. Secondly, and as a result of the first point, there was a marked increase in the quantity of production of

[8] Kornicki (1994) has pointed out that in Japan, wood block printing, which bears similarities with lithography, remained popular long after moveable type was known to the Japanese. He argues that there were both economic and aesthetic reasons why wood blocks remained popular. Like the manuscript, wood-block printed books retained a distinct personality and style of the calligrapher, which was appealing to the reader.

[9] For major features of early European printing culture, to some extent corresponding to early Malay printing culture, see Eisenstein (2000: 42-91). For observations on the shift to print culture in Southeast Asia, see R. Harrison (2000: 22).

books, and they became more widespread. Thirdly, the availability of relatively cheap printed books served as a stimulus for literacy and education, thus creating a broader reading audience. Fourthly, with respect to traditional Malay literature, we can be fairly sure that if a text continued to be copied in the manuscript form, then it was still considered to have value for the society in which is was produced. If the text was no longer valued then it would no longer be copied. We cannot say the same with certainty of printed books.

When looking at the internal aspect of literature, there are various possible approaches to understanding what constitutes a traditional and what constitutes a modern literary text. As literature is a facet of the culture of a particular society, which is based on certain principles of the world-view (*Weltanschauung*), it seems useful to differentiate traditional literature from modern in terms of fundamental ideas of their world-view. Traditional culture, and consequently traditional literature, is based on a monistic (monocentric), religious *Weltanschauung*, unified to a fairly high degree and shared by the entire community. Correspondingly, the cultural and literary activity in the traditional society was understood as a manifestation of communal life and an expression of communal values rather than as an act of individual creativity. In modern culture and literature, which is based on a pluralistic (polycentric) and secular (or secularized in different degrees) world-view, the role of communal principle progressively decreases, whereas the role of individual principle and individual creativity, on the contrary, increases.

Among many salient features of traditional culture and literature, there are three that seem to be most significant (see Braginsky 2001: 25). The first of them is the notion of the Absolute or the Supreme Authority (Allah in the Malay Islamic tradition) who determines the entire world-view of traditional culture/literature and therefore its monocentricity, and whose design of the universe is revealed through the sacred text (the Quran in this case). The second feature is the principle of canonicity, i.e., the all-permeating idea of the right or the proper, which is understood uniformly by the community. Traceable back to and controlled by the Supreme Authority, this principle determines the correct arrangement of the universe, including such facets of it as culture and literature in general and their component parts in particular. Finally,

canonicity determines the third principle, namely that of traditionalism (in the narrow sense of the word). This principle implies the orientation of traditional culture and literature to self-identity, stability and correct transmission of their norms, values and conventions from one generation to another.

There are several implications that stem from the model of traditional culture/literature (Malay in particular) based on the above-mentioned principles. Didacticism, a generally cited characteristic of traditional literature, is a natural emanation of the principle of canonicity with its all-embracing propriety sanctioned by the Supreme Authority. As an outcome, both the composition of the literary text by the author, who follows the example of the Supreme Authority in the correct, well-arranged execution of his work, and the perception of this text by the reader are highly reminiscent of the teaching process. Further on, the same, authoritatively sanctioned and communally shared idea of the right leads to the domination of literary conventions over a realistic representation of nature and society. Thus literature depicts the world as it should be rather than as it is. Canonicity also brings about the normative character of poetics, thus leaving only limited space for the self-expression of the individual.[10]

Finally, the ideas that the whole universe was created by the Supreme Authority once and for all and that the complete knowledge of it is concealed in the depths of the sacred text, bring to life a specific understanding of innovation in traditional culture and literature. The new literary element is viewed not as a result of creation, i.e., an addition to culture or literature of something earlier non-existent and now made by the author, but rather as a discovery of 'something which has always existed in it (culture; B.M.) in an implicit form, and which has only now been revealed thanks to the penetration of the author into the fundamentals of the culture' (Braginsky 2001: 26). Thus, the traditional understanding of innovation bears an intensive rather than an extensive character.

[10] In Malay literature, the *pantun* is a good example. The *pantun* speaks of love in general terms, reflecting communal ideas of appropriate erotic behaviour. Individual shades of erotic emotions occur in *pantun* very rarely, if at all.

The development from the traditional to the modern can be seen as a process in which the former is gradually overcome by the latter. This process certainly happens differently and uniquely in each society. However there comes a point where we can say that a society and its literature are modern. In contrast with communalistic, monocentric (monistic) traditional literature, modern literature may be viewed as emanating from individualistic, polycentric (pluralistic) society in which the power of one Supreme Authority is considerably weakened or it is absent as the factor determining the development of literature/culture. As a result, the communally shared understanding of right and wrong begins to disintegrate and relativism comes to replace canonicity. As an outcome, one unitary system of values to be transmitted ceases to exist. Consequently, instead of the preservation and transmission of communal values, there emerges a demand for innovation, and normative poetics are replaced by individual poetics.

With the withering of the central concept of the right and proper, so too didacticism as an essential element recedes. It can still be present though much less overtly, the key feature now is the focus on the individual rather than the strengthening and teaching the values of community. The world is seen through the eyes of individuals, and as such the individuals will establish conventions for themselves. Linked to this is the growth of realism with the greater interest in the phenomena of real individual lives.

Specific scenarios that led to this process in the Malay world were visits to Europe and increased contact with Europeans, the rise of western or at least more secular types of education and also the advent of the printing press and journalism. It is notable that journalism, as a particular style of writing, draws writers and readers towards reality and away from conventions (R. Harrison, 2000: 23). In the Malay world some existing genres such as chronicles, and new genres such as biography and travelogue were among the first to show this more realistic and individualistic portrayal of events.

Introduction to sources

The thesis looks at more than forty Malay texts originating from Sumatra, Java the Malay Peninsula and elsewhere. The texts are linked by the fact that they all, to a greater or lesser degree, include Britain or British individuals within their narratives. The texts are all written in Malay, either in Jawi or Rumi script; some were in the form of manuscripts, others as printed books. All of them fall into the category of what I loosely define to be traditional Malay literature[11].

This study includes only narrative texts and thus does not include letters. There are two reasons for this. Firstly the sheer number of letters means that they would undoubtedly merit their own study. Secondly, traditional Malay letters have their own particular conventions and formulae (Gallop, 1994), different from those of the *hikayat* and *syair* studied in this thesis. Also, as a further limit on the scope of this thesis, early newspapers and magazines have generally been excluded. The nineteenth century also saw a growth in publishing of books about sciences and in particular geography. These texts generally represent a mixture of translations and rewritings of books originating from the West, and thus have not been considered relevant for this thesis.

In writing this thesis the present author has tried to consider as many literary texts that portray the British as possible. Inevitably this thesis is not exhaustive in that there are texts that have not been consulted. In the case of texts such as *Syair Prince*

[11] As discussed in the previous section, the current author sees traditional literature as a literature that emanates from, and therefore that is a product of the values of traditional society. While with regard to written literature we can point to the stone inscriptions in characters of Indian origin from the first millennium, and the Malay manuscript tradition, which seems to have mostly been created after the penetration of Islam between the late thirteenth and early sixteenth centuries (Braginsky, 2005: 2) it is perhaps a fruitless task to try to give dates to the emergence of this literature when we remember the vital oral aspect of traditional literature which certainly existed in traditional Malay societies prior to the coming of Islam, and even prior to the coming of Hindu-Buddhist religions from the first century onwards. Furthermore, rather than give dates as to when traditional literature might have ended, the current author takes the view that each text must be considered separately, and wider generalisations are dangerous. By the nineteenth and certainly early twentieth century, just as traditional and modern values co-existed, so too authors from different sections of the same society produced both markedly traditional and markedly modern texts simultaneously. Indeed texts notable for their predominantly modern characteristics can predate texts marked by the existence of a large number of traditional features, as is highlighted by the case of the 'modern' Indonesian novels produced in the 1920s and the *Hikayat Pahang*, dating from the 1930s.

of Wales, this is due to the length of the manuscript which is in a very poor condition. Without doubt other texts exist that portray the British but have yet to be discovered.

It should be stressed that while the British feature in a large number of traditional Malay texts, this does not imply that the British presence is necessarily significant to the texts themselves. Only in a small number of texts might we argue that the British were a primary focus of the narrative, for example in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* or perhaps *Hikayat Abdullah*. However, even when episodes portraying the British are or minor importance to the central focus of the texts, it should still be recognised that a conscious decision was made by the author to mark individuals out as British, as opposed to a wider label such as *orang putih* (white man). Thus while there may not be a large number of texts in which the portrayal of the British is significant to those texts as a whole, we should still consider the reasons that a variety of authors considered the inclusion of the British, whether as dominant players or simply as characters in passing, relevant to their narratives and to their audiences.

Texts that would be universally recognised as falling into the category of traditional Malay literature such as *Misa Melayu* and *Hikayat Aceh* are certainly part of this study. Less known panegyrics to Queen Victoria, written at the end of the nineteenth century, bare so many commonalities with earlier texts in terms of style, language and content that there should be little doubt that they are traditional texts. However texts written by Munsyi Abdullah, for example *Hikayat Abdullah*, are not perhaps so generally accepted as being traditional. While Abdullah is recognised by some scholars as the father of modern Malay literature, his works are not obviously modern in the way that A.Samad Said's *Salina* is. While it is easy to state that day is day and night is night, it is not so easy to say when day ends and when night begins. While some of the texts may contain modern elements, and certainly this is the case with a text such as *Hikayat Abdullah,* so too they have numerous traditional elements, and as such they are included in this corpus of traditional texts.

CHAPTER ONE

CONTEXTS

In order to contextualise the production of Malay texts which portray the British, it is necessary to first briefly outline the history of British involvement in the Malay world. This historical overview is given in the first half of this chapter. In addition to listing the key locations and periods of British activity, it is also necessary to pay some attention to British administrative structures in the region. The system of administration was far from static, and in later chapters the Malay understanding of the British system of governance will be discussed, hence the importance of summarising the main details of the bureaucracy and the most important administrative positions.

The second part of this chapter will give academic and scholarly context, that is, a consideration of extant academic research on the portrayal of the 'other' in traditional Malay literature. This will be followed by an overview of various theoretical issues concerning the study of the 'other'. In addition, key aspects of theoretical discussions regarding colonial discourse and postcolonialism will be considered, accompanied by an assessment of their relevance to the scope and content of this thesis.

The British and the Malay World

The present political situation whereby the Malay world spreads across the boundaries of four nation states[1], has led to a writing of history that sometimes seems restricted by present boundaries. Histories of Malaysia for example, have tended to be

[1] Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei. One might also include Thailand and the southern Philippines, due to the Malay population in the southern parts of those countries.

written with the aim of showing how the current state of Malaysia came into being[2], with a similar situation for Indonesia[3]. These modern borders can tend to add to the view of a certain inevitability that certain sultanates would come together, while the significance of links between areas that now cross borders of different modern states is downplayed. It is only perhaps in those histories written from a wider perspective, or more thematically[4], that the previous close links between areas that now make up Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei have space to resonate. Hence one of the purposes of this overview is to stress the activity of the British not just in present day Malaysia, but also to recognise their involvement in the archipelago that today makes up Indonesia.

First British arrival in the region

The first arrival of the British[5] in Southeast Asia occurred in the late sixteenth century, noticeably later than the Portuguese and Spanish, and around the same time as the Dutch. The reasons for this relative tardiness are complex, but certainly it was not for want of trying (Lawson, 1993: 8). In 1599, the successful return to Europe of six Dutch ships from the East Indies was the spur for the formation of the 'Company of Merchants of London, trading into the East-Indies' [6].

The period 1600-1613 saw twelve British voyages to the Spice Islands[7]. (Lawson, 1993: 21). It was on the first EIC voyage that James Lancaster reached

[2] Watson Andaya and Andaya, 1982; Hall, 1981.

[3] Ricklefs, 1993; Taylor, 2003; Hall, 1981.

[4] The most notable of such approaches is to be found in Reid, 1988 and1993. See also Day, 2002 and Wolters, 1999. In traditional Malay historical texts themselves, such as *Sejarah Melayu* and *Hikayat raja Pasai*, such close links are of course very much apparent.

[5] When considering the activities of the British in the Malay world, it is as well to remember that there were also Britons working and serving on non-British ships. A case in point which will be discussed later in this thesis is that of the two Britons, John Davis and Mr Tomkins who were serving on the Dutch ship, captained by Cornelius Houteman, that stopped off in Aceh in 1599. Undoubtedly there were other such cases, many perhaps unrecorded, of Britons encountering indigenous populations in the Malay world. Whether local populations were able or concerned to differentiate between different European nationalities is another matter.

[6] The Company went through various changes to its official name. Hereafter it will be referred to as the EIC (East India Company).

[7] British individuals had of course made it as far as Southeast Asia before the founding of the EIC. Drake had visited Ternate in the Spice Islands in 1579 during his circumnavigation (1577-1580). James Lancaster reached as far as the Malay Peninsula while searching for Portuguese ships to plunder on a

Aceh[8], which was used as a base for expeditions down the west coast of Sumatra. The British also managed to secure a base on the island of Run in the Spice Islands, though it proved a source of constant trouble with the Dutch[9]. The reality was that the British had been beaten to the Spice Islands by the Dutch and were therefore forced to rethink their strategy for trading in the East. From the 1620's onwards the company 'was forced to open trade and make money where it could rather than where it wanted to. In practice, this meant the Company would operate in those areas of no interest or use to the Dutch' (Lawson, 1993: 32). While India increasingly rose to the fore in the minds of EIC directors, it should be noted that British involvement in the Indonesian archipelago continued for the next two centuries.

All but forced out of the Spice Islands[10], the British looked to establish themselves elsewhere in the Indonesian archipelago, and indeed managed to operate a successful pepper trade. The main British base in the East Indies in the seventeenth century was to be Banten[11]. This Javanese entrepôt had already been reached by the Dutch when the British first arrived there in 1602[12] and indeed it was due to Dutch pressure on the local sultan that the British were forced out of Banten in 1682. By this time the Dutch, through monopoly treaties, had also managed to exclude the British from Banjarmasin (1651), Palembang (1662) and Indragiri (1664). In addition, the British factory in Jambi had been destroyed in 1679 (Kathirithamby-Wells, 1977: 6). Having been pushed out of almost every base in the region, the British were forced to find a new site if they were to maintain a foot in the pepper market. Thus, in 1685 the

voyage from 1591-94 (Keay, 1991: 12). In 1583-91, Fitch and Newberry, under the auspices of the Levant Company, travelled overland to India and then to the Spice Islands (Lawson, 1993, 13).

[8] Lancaster received a great reception from the Acehnese ruler, Alaudin Shah. A letter from Queen Elizabeth was given to the ruler, Lancaster and his men were entertained, and the British were granted a house and royal protection.

[9] For full details of the voyage see Keay (1991: 14-23). Lancaster's own account is to be found in Purchas, 1905: vol. 2, 399-437. A letter giving permission to trade, granted to one of Lancaster's men, Henry Middleton, by the Acehnese sultan is held at the Bodleian Library. A photograph of the letter, together with discussion and transcription of it is in Gallop (1991: 36).

[10] The letters from the exiled ruler of Ambon (1658), and from Sultan Nuku of Tidore (Kathirithamby-Wells, 1977) and Sultan Muhammad Yasin of Ternate (1802), discussed by Gallop (1991: 38-39) show that connections did not end completely.

[11] This sultanate is often also known as Bantem/Bantam.

[12] In addition to these main bases in Banten and later in Bengkulu, the English established numerous other posts throughout the Indies, though rarely with any great success. By 1611 posts had been established in Makassar, Jepara, Aceh and Jambi. There were also various attempts at posts in Borneo. For fuller details see Foster (1933: 244-279).

British established a new factory in Bengkulu[13]. Subsequent years saw an expansion of the monopoly on pepper and the area under British protection taking in Krui, Mukomuko and Menjuto. The status of the settlement of Bengkulu was raised in 1760 to that of presidency, thus joining the Indian presidencies of Madras, Bombay and Bengal.

The beginnings of territorial expansion on the Malay Peninsula

While official British interest in the Malay Peninsula had been minimal in the seventeenth and much of the eighteenth centuries[14], the country traders had gained a significant knowledge of local conditions in the peninsula. British individuals acted as advisers on political and military matters to local rulers and were often knowledgeable of Malay. By the late eighteenth century, however, Britain was in the ascendant, and managed to gain a position of commercial dominance over other European powers. An indication of this new confidence was the taking of Penang in 1786 (Watson Andaya and Andaya 1982: 100-102).

The negotiation with Kedah of a settlement on Penang in 1786 by Francis Light established Britain as a territorial power on the Malay Peninsula[15]. Initially the settlement was established as much to provide a safe haven for British shipping passing through on the way to China as for the founding of a trading port. Penang was promoted to the status of a presidency in 1805, on the expectation that it would become an important naval base (Mills, 1925: 33). While Penang never lived up to British hopes and expectations, the establishment of the settlement must be seen as marking a new period of territorial expansion in the peninsula.

[13] For key documents concerning the British in Bengkulu see: Bastin, 1965. Concerning the British in West Sumatra generally see: Harfield, 1995; Young, 1970; Kathirithamby–Wells, 1977; Keay, 1991: 245-250.

[14] The British had previously maintained a factory at Patani from 1611 to 1623, and a small agency in Kedah was founded in 1699 but faded out after a few years (Mills, 1925: 18).

[15] The reason for Kedah's initial receptiveness towards the British is best understood in the light of their hoping for protection against the resurgent Siamese and Burmese. Other states on the peninsula also initially saw the British as a potential ally against Siamese, Bugis and Dutch ambitions (Watson Andaya and Andaya 1982).

A new period of activity in the archipelago

The end of the eighteenth century saw Britain becoming more involved than ever in the Malay world. Napoleon conquering the Netherlands in 1795 provided the spur for further involvement in insular Southeast Asia. In 1795 the British assumed direct control of several VOC possessions in the Malay world, as part of a general policy of preventing any Dutch possessions falling into French hands. Following the Dutch stadthouder's flight to Britain, he requested that, until he was restored to power, Dutch territories in the East come under the control of the British. Thus the Dutch possession of Melaka, while technically still under the Dutch, became temporarily under British rule in 1795. Padang in western Sumatra was also occupied in 1795[16]. Ambon was taken in 1796, and in 1811 Java fell under British control so beginning the five years of Raffles rule in Java[17]. The Javanese heartlands, centred on the sultanate at Yogyakarta fell in 1812[18]. The British also became involved in the affairs of the sultanate of Palembang in Sumatra, attacking the city and sacking the court in order to put their favoured candidate on the throne in 1812. While these possessions were returned to the Dutch in 1816, the British continued to interfere in the affairs of Palembang from their base in Bengkulu.

The founding of The Straits Settlements and the end of EIC rule

In 1819, Raffles signed a treaty with the *temenggung* of Riau-Johor, territorial chief of Singapore, which gave the British the right to establish a factory on the island. The founding of Singapore marked a new period in the British presence in the Malay peninsular, for it confirmed the dominance of British commercial interests in the region[19]. Trade flourished there to an extent never possible in Penang. The main potential rival was Batavia. Free trade policies had been introduced in the Javanese port under the British, prompting renewed growth, but with the return of the Dutch

[16] It had also been occupied briefly by the English in 1781-4.

[17] For further detail on Raffles see: Boulger, 1973; Bastin, 1957; Wurtzburg, 1954; Raffles, Sophia. 1830; Raffles, T.S. 1817.

[18] Detailed accounts of the Java campaigns are to be found in Thorn, 1815 and Raffles, 1817.

[19] For detail on the founding of Singapore see: Mills, 1925: 49-72; Turnbull, 1972; Tarling, 1962; Cowan, 1961.

and the re-imposition of tariffs, Singapore was ideally located to win commerce away from Batavia.

1824 saw an Anglo-Dutch agreement[20], which divided the Malay world through the Straits of Melaka. This treaty provided the basis for the later colonial division of the Malay world between British and Dutch, and thus also the basis for the modern borders between Malaysia and Indonesia. One result of the agreement was the British withdrawal from Bengkulu and, on a more general level, the agreement signalled the end of British involvement in the archipelago, with the exception of Borneo, which was not included in the treaty.

1826 saw the founding of the Straits Settlements, taking in Singapore, Melaka, Penang and Province Wellesley. While the 1824 treaty determined the peninsula as a British sphere of influence, allowing the British to trade with and indeed become politically involved with the affairs of the various states making up the peninsula, it was not until the signing of the Pangkor Treaty in 1874 that official rule was to extend beyond the Straits Settlements. In the meantime, the demise of the EIC in 1858 saw the rule of the Straits Settlements pass over to the British government.

The Pangkor treaty

The British were generally against becoming involved in Malay quarrels. Their policy can perhaps be seen as one of trying to keep any disputes as localised as possible, in order to protect trade and investments. Further territorial involvement in the region would only imply far greater costs, and threat to profits. Despite this aim, the 1860s and 1870s saw increasing levels of conflict in the peninsula, and subsequent pressure on the British to take firmer steps to encourage an atmosphere more conducive to investment and trade. The British were drawn into the increasing problems in Selangor and Perak in the 1870's, and other local factions were quick to grasp the benefit of British support in local internal disputes. The culmination of these complicated local disputes was the Pangkor Treaty of 1874. This treaty signed with

[20] The text of the treaty is reproduced in Bastin and Winks (1966: 134-136).

Perak, recognised the Sultan, in return for his acceptance of a British resident[21]. The advice of that resident was to be 'asked and acted upon on all questions other than those touching Malay religion and custom'. In the same year a resident was appointed to Selangor and over the next half a century, this concept of British adviser to the sultan as contained in the Pangkor Treaty would come to be applied in the other states of the peninsula. As Watson Andaya and Andaya have pointed out, the residential system, which entailed a continuing association between the colonial power and the Malay elite saw a Malay ruling class 'slowly drawn into an alien Western ambience with values and a lifestyle totally foreign to that of the Malay villager ... While village lifestyles remained unchanged, many members of the Malay ruling class were adopting Western dress, living in Western houses and even taking trips to London in emulation of the colonial official' (1982: 175).

1896 saw the reorganisation of the Protected States (Perak, Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang[22]) as the Federated Malay States, with the capital at Kuala Lumpur. The beginning of the twentieth century saw increasing British involvement in the northern Malay states of Kedah[23], Kelantan[24] and Trengganu[25], which were still under the suzerainty of Siam. The culmination of this involvement came in 1909, with the final transfer of those states to Britain[26]. There was opposition to joining the Federated Malay States, and so instead British advisers were appointed, following on from British agents who had already been in place in Kedah and Kelantan[27]. This period also saw Johor[28] entering the official British sphere of interest, and finally in 1914, Johor's general adviser was made responsible to the high commissioner in Singapore rather than to the sultan. Thus the whole of the peninsula had come under British control, in the form of the Straits Settlements, the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States.

[21] For detailed discussion of Pangkor Treaty and its impact see Gullick (1992: 2-32); Parkinson (1960); Watson Andaya and Andaya (1982: 157-204); Sadka 1968. British policy regarding Malaya into the early twentieth century is to be found specifically in Thio, 1969; Chai Hon Chan, 1967.

[22] For the history of these individual states see: Winstedt and Wilkinson, 1934; Winstedt, 1934a, 1934b; Linehan, 1936.

[23] For the history of Kedah see: Bonney, 1971; Sharom Ahmad, 1969.

[24] For the history of Kelantan see: Roff (ed.), 1974; Kessler, 1978; Shahril Talib, 1995.

[25] For the history of Trengganu see: Sheppherd, 1949; Robert, 1977; Shaharil Talib, 1984.

[26] A detailed description of these events can be found in: Gullick (1992: 136-184).

[27] For British involvement in these northern states see: Chandran, 1971; Thio, 1969; Klein, 1968; Marks, 1997.

[28] For the history of Johor see: Winstedt, 1932; Andaya, 1976; Trocki, 1979.

British organisation and bureaucracy

The bureaucratic organisation of the British in the Malay world, first coming under the EIC, and then as part of the British government, became ever more complex. In this section, the various structures for organising and ordering the British presence will be briefly outlined, with particular attention to the higher levels of office. As will become clear in later chapters, particularly in texts from the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, quite an array of titles were used by Malay authors, and thus this section aims to give background to such detail.

The EIC

From the period of Lancaster's first voyages to the East Indies, until 1858, British activities in the Malay world were conducted under the auspices of the EIC. While the administrative system of the EIC was far from static, once established, the general basis of the decision making hierarchy remained nonetheless constant. Ultimate control of the EIC was held by the court of directors in London. Initially, communications were between the court of directors and the captains of each individual voyage, and the factor in the early settlements. However, as the situation became more complex, communication ran from the court of directors directly to the presidencies in Asia, and from those presidencies to officials next in rank at the other settlements and trading stations[29]. By the 1680's, once this system had become established, there were three presidencies in India, namely Bengal, Madras and Bombay. By the second half of the eighteenth century the Bengal presidency was becoming the most important of the three, and changes to the administrative system created a governor-general in Bengal, who would have right of veto over the Bengal council and the other presidencies (Lawson, 1993: 128). In addition to these three Indian presidencies, there was the so-called 'fourth' presidency, first based in Bengkulu (1760-1785), and later in the Straits Settlements (1805-1830). Bengal was the presidency with jurisdiction over the Malay settlements prior to the establishment

[29] For a full description of the administration and commercial functioning of the EIC see Chaudhuri, 1978: 1-78.

of their 'own' presidency, and from 1785 onwards the newly appointed governor-general in Bengal presided over affairs in the Malay world.

The heads of the settlement in Bengkulu held various titles. Before and after the period of the Bengkulu presidency, the chief British official generally took the title of deputy-governor. Once raised to the status of a presidency in 1760, the chief official was the governor. When further downgraded to the status of factory in 1801, the chief tended to take the title of resident[30]. Raffles is the one exception, for when he ruled briefly in Bengkulu from 1818-24, he had the title of lieutenant-governor. Outside the main centre of Bengkulu, smaller administrative centres tended to be headed by officials with the title of resident or, at a lower level still, factor.

From its founding in 1786 until 1805, Penang was under the control of the governor of Bengal, and had the status of a residency[31]. The second period from 1805-1826 saw Penang upgraded to become the Eastern or 'fourth' presidency, on a par with Madras, Bengal and Bombay, and so under the control of the governor-general of India. However, from its founding in 1819 until 1823, Singapore was a dependency of Bengkulu, and then from 1823 until 1826 it was under the direct control of the governor-general in India.

While the system of rule that would be developed by the British in Malaya has been described as indirect, the system adopted by Raffles in Java was, by way of contrast, far more direct (Bastin, 1957: xiv). The title of lieutenant-governor was given to Raffles and his successor in Batavia, and below him were a number of residents throughout Java[32]. The *bupati* had considerably less power that had been the case under the Dutch.

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[30] For lists of ranks and titles held in Bengkulu see Harfield, 1995: 510-540; Kathirithamby-Wells, 1977: 223-226.

[31] Mill's chapter on '*The civil service in the Straits Settlements, 1786-1867*'(Mills, 1925: 82-98) and Heussler's chapter on '*The civil services: the early period*' (Heussler, 1981, 24-53) give a very full and detailed account of the governmental organisation of British interests in the Malay peninsula during that period.

[32] For detailed accounts of the administrative system in Java under the British see: Boulger, 1973; Bastin, 1957.

It was only in 1826, with the formation of the Straits Settlements, that the rule of Penang, Province Wellesley, Melaka and Singapore became unified. The headquarters remained in Penang, which initially maintained its status as a presidency. In 1830 the status of presidency was dropped, thus the Straits Settlements became a residency, under the control of the governor and council of Bengal. Heussler has remarked that from this time on '*the settlements were now a minor appendage of the Bengal government*' (1981: 24). Then in 1832, in recognition of the growing importance of Singapore, the headquarters of the settlements was transferred there. While they remained a presidency, the Straits Settlements were headed by a governor, and under him came three resident-councillors, one in each town. With the demotion in status to a residency, the governor became a resident, to be assisted by deputy-residents, though in 1832, with the transfer of headquarters to Singapore, there was a restoration of the titles of governor and resident-councillor. In 1851, the Straits Settlements were put under the direct authority of the governor-general of India, with the power previously exercised from the Bengal presidency being vested in the governor of the Straits (Mills, 1925: 82-3). With the demise of the company, the authority of the governor-general in India was replaced by the India Office, and finally in 1867 responsibility passed from the India Office to the Colonial office.

Direct control from London

Once the Colonial Office took over, the main initial change was that appointments were now agreed on in London. The administration system within the Straits Settlements[33] themselves, however, remained on the same lines as described above. The administration was headed by the governor of Singapore. The resident-general had jurisdiction over the residents and also represented the federation's interest to the governor of Singapore, who was also the high commissioner for the Malay States. In 1909, the balance shifted further to Singapore with the creation of a federal council, headed by the high commissioner in Singapore and assisted by the resident-general in Kuala Lumpur (Watson Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 183-4).

[33] For detail on the administration in this period see Gullick, 1992; Heussler, 1981.

Following on from the Pangkor Treaty, British authority spread into the four Federated States. As discussed above, the system adopted in these Malay states was very much one of indirect rule. Existing indigenous power structures were accommodated into the British system, leaving the Malay people answerable to their sultans, but with the sultans subject to the advice and guidance of the British in all matters excluding religion and culture. The residential system in these four states was headed by a resident, under him were a number of district officers, under whom were the *penghulu,* and finally the lowest administrative unit, the village, would have been under the *kepala kampong* (village head). These *penghulu* were no longer responsible directly to the sultan, but rather to the district officer. The further spread of power in 1909 to the northern Malay states of Kedah and Kelantan saw the appointment of 'advisers'[34]. However Trengganu resisted the appointment of an 'adviser' and instead settled for an 'agent'. Johor too, in 1909, saw the first appointment of a British financial adviser.

The non-official British presence

In addition of course to the government civil servants, a range of other Westerners came to the British possessions in the Malay world, principally traders and merchants. Such colonial endeavour was very much a man's world and until the nineteenth century few British women came to the settlements. For example, in Bengkulu it was reported in 1712 by the new governor that there were only five 'White things in petticoats on the coast' (Bastin, 1965: xxi). In 1801 there was only one European woman in Bengkulu (Bastin, 1965: xxi).

As was typical of all settlements in the Malay world, the European population in Singapore remained small in comparison with other races. Even in 1845, of the 25,000 or so inhabitants of the actual town of Singapore, there were only 288 Europeans[35], and 270 Indo-Britons. While the British individuals that are portrayed in literary texts tend to come from the administrative ranks, there is one other group that stands out for their contact with the indigenous population and also for their portrayal

[34] Kedah and Kelantan had already had British agents, for some years, although still under Siamese suzerainty (see Watson Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 191-198).
[35] Census of 1845, quoted in Skinner, 1973: 21.

in Malay literature. Various missionaries are mentioned in the Malay texts studied in this thesis, in particular the works of Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi. He worked for a time for the London Missionary Society[36], which had a base in Melaka from 1815 – 1843. While the main interest was actually in local Chinese populations, missionaries also devoted time to learning Malay, and translating texts, mainly religious, into Malay. The requirement for missionaries to learn local languages and local customs led to a particular need to come into contact with the local population. While most missionaries left when China was opened to Christian missionaries after the First Opium War (1842), some individual missionaries stayed on and continued to have close contact with the local population, for example Benjamin Keasberry, notable for his involvement in local education and publishing.

Existing scholarship on the portrayal of Europeans in traditional Malay literature

The portrayal of the British or indeed Europeans in traditional Malay literature has so far received little attention. This is perhaps surprising, for historical works represent the most studied corpus in the wider body of traditional Malay texts, and the British and other Europeans do feature in a large number of extant works. While the representation of the East in Western sources is an increasingly productive source for academic study, it is striking that the reverse approach, looking at representations of the West in Eastern sources, has received far less attention. This apparent deficiency will be discussed later in the chapter. However, it is necessary, first of all, to define the place of this thesis in the field of Malay and Indonesian studies, by reviewing previous related scholarship.

The most extensive study on the portrayal of Europeans in Malay literature to date, *De Europeaan in de Maleische Literatur,* was submitted by Van der Linden as his doctoral thesis in 1937. Not only is his study perhaps the broadest in scope, but the ideas and conclusions arrived at by Van der Linden permeate almost all subsequent scholarship on Malay literary portrayals of the West. His study surveys a total of eighty texts divided into three sections; literature up to 1800, literature of the

[36] See Harrison (1979) for a history of the London Missionary society in Melaka.

19th century and modern Malay novels[37]. On one count, his study was much more far reaching than the present study purports to be, in that he sought to include all texts mentioning Europeans. What is more, in addition to traditional literature, Van der Linden looked at what he terms modern literature, including such texts as *Sitti Nurbaya* and *Azab dan sengsara.* However, on another count, Van der Linden's thesis was more limited than the present study, for that 1937 thesis was restricted by the availability of texts. In part, this was due to the physical constraints in accessing a corpus of texts which is held in various collections in Europe and Southeast Asia. However, the present study also benefits from a number of published editions of texts which have become available since the 1930's. Also it should not be forgotten that in the early twentieth century literary production of traditional texts was still in process. Works included in this study such as *Syair Tuan Hampris* and *Hikayat Pahang* had only just been completed when Van der Linden was defending his thesis in Utrecht. Finally, it should be added that Van der Linden's study lack any theoretical framework.

Van der Linden's main observation is that there is a paucity of information about Europeans in Malay literature, with Europeans only being portrayed when historical fact makes it impossible to ignore them. Thus, Van der Linden argues, Malay texts give the impression that contacts with Europeans are of less importance and frequency than is suggested in the European sources. He notes a technique he describes as giving a 'tendentious twist' to the events (*tendentieuze wending*) such that when key events involving Europeans are described, their role is often understated, with increased emphasis put onto the role played by Malays (1937: 9). These arguments on paucity of attention to Europeans echo through later scholarship that touches on this subject (Van der Kroef, 1963; Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985; Kratz, 2000). Van der Kroef (1963) refers to Van der Linden when he argues that Indonesian *hikayat* and *syair* show little attempt to understand the actual character of the European and their motivations, a view reiterated by Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1985: 30) in the introduction to their study of *Syair Mukomuko.* They argue that the purpose of *Syair Mukomuko*, as an example of a Malay court chronicle, is to glorify and cherish the

[37] The majority of which came from present day Indonesia.

Malay world-view. This glorification of the past, together with court life and *adat* is given pre-eminence and everything else is secondary to it. Given that a key symbol of this world-view is the inner world of ceremony and affairs of royalty, which are not of direct concern to the EIC other than in their military capacity, foreigners remain outside the traditional world described in *Syair Mukomuko.*

In his discussion of historicity and historical truth in Malay literary texts, Kratz notes Van der Linden's conclusion that Malay texts make hardly any mention of the presence of Europeans, but argues that this is no different from the representation of other trading nations from elsewhere in Asia. Relations with Indian nations and China are sparingly recorded (Kratz, 2000: 26). Kratz argues that this is despite the fact that the presence of foreigners in the ports of Southeast Asia was not at all unusual. Pointing out a tendency for writers and texts to be inward looking, Kratz (2000: 27) considers a certain amount of readers' knowledge to be taken for granted. In a similar vein, Reid points to the lack of surprise that Southeast Asians felt on coming into contact with Europeans, already being accustomed to encounters with a tremendous diversity of other races. Thus in contrast to the surprise and astonishment expressed by Europeans on encountering Southeast Asia, 'except in the cases where they achieved spectacular military victories, Europeans are largely ignored by indigenous chronicles until the eighteenth century' (Reid,1999: 160).

Descriptions of Europeans are seen as often being characterised only by the mention of names and titles, with little reference made to the different natures and characters of Europeans, all of them being referred to as '*orang putih*'. On this point Van der Linden takes issue with Winstedt's suggestion that the various nationalities made different impressions for particular reasons[38]. While noting that Winstedt's conclusions are plausible, he finds very little evidence for such differentiation in the texts (Van der Linden, 1937: 17). He sees only a few European individuals such as G.W. Baron van Imhoff, P.J. van Braam, H.W. Daendels and C.P.J. Elout as making a big impression on Malay writers. Suggesting that individuals respected by Malays were most likely to enter into their literature, Van der Linden (1937: 13) points to the

[38] It should be noted that Winstedt's comments, which are to be found in the concluding remarks of his History of Malaya, are based not on literary texts, but rather on his general observations (Winstedt, 1935:256-7).

fact that Elout was historically quite insignificant, but that his knowledge of the Malay language, together with his ability to relate to the indigenous population earned him sympathy from the Malays. Abdullah is understood to be the writer who broke with the form and character of traditional Malay literature and, as such, had a new mentality whereby the Europeans he met were no longer strange 'other' creatures, but rather fellow men from whom something could be learnt. Due to this 'warm interest' for what the Europeans brought to his country, Van der Linden (1937: 13) sees Abdullah as the only Malay author who gives character sketches of any importance. It is only in the works of Abdullah that Van der Linden detects a distinction made between the British and Dutch, particularly with regards to styles of governance. It is also noted that Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Misri argues that British rule was more damaging for the indigenous population as a result of their draining of the fields. In *Syair Perang Inggeris di Betawi,* in which a preference for the British is highlighted, Van der Linden sees its author as being prejudiced in favour of Raffles.

Generally, Van der Linden argues that the portrayal of Europeans is characterised by their conversion into typical Malay figures, who think, speak and act like Malay people. The only aspects of the descriptions that are not Malay are their names, titles and ranks, their clothes, weapons and jewellery, and their customs and habits such as their manner of eating and norms of politeness. Van der Linden remarks that just as the Malays pay much attention to etiquette and protocol, so they always mention the types of greeting and demonstration of respect shown by the Europeans (*berpegang tangan, mengangkat* or *membuka topi*). Van der Kroef repeats Van der Linden's conclusion that the few company figures that made any real impression on the indigenous writers, tend to be metamorphasised into Arjuna style, typical Indonesian heroes and takes issue with R. Bambang Oetomo (1960) for contending that, at the beginning of the eighteenth century, the Indonesians had acquired a "clearly outlined image" of the Netherlanders. Indeed Van der Kroef points to textual examples of Indonesian rulers seeking to legitimise Dutch suzerainty by mythologizing Dutch descent from Indonesian ruling dynasties[39]. Sweeney (1980b:

[39] Carey has drawn our attention to a number of Javanese texts which describe the British period in Java, focussing on the impact of the British on the Javanese courts of Yogyakarta and Surakarta. One text, the *Babad Inggeris,* which seeks to explain the rule of Thomas Stamford Raffles, presents the British lieutenant-governor as being half Javanese by birth, as a means of legitimising his sudden accession to power in Java (Carey, 1992: 4).

12) has argued that even in those texts written in settlements under European rule, by writers generally not raised in the palace tradition, 'the various governors and high officials are referred to as rajas and are often spoken of in court language[40]'. Sweeney sees such continued use of traditional schemata and language, when referring to the officials and governors of the colonial powers, as being explained by the need for the colonial administration to be meaningful to the local inhabitants. What is more, as Sweeney points out, several authors obviously set out to eulogize their European patrons, which he also argues must be seen very much in the traditional mould of the conventional panegyrics with which the palace scribe would laud his royal patron (Sweeney, 1980b: 13). Murtagh (2000 and 2002) noted the representation of Raffles with the features of an ideal Malay ruler in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*. Skinner's study (1963) of *Syair perang Mengkasar* highlights the fact that freed from the possible limiting influence of European patronage, representation of Europeans could take quite another perspective. This poem was written very much from the Makassarese perspective, for whom the Dutch were the enemy, and hence representations of the Dutch, and the collection of less than complimentary epithets that accompanied their mention were, as Skinner remarks, far from objective (1963: 9-12).

The nineteenth century is highlighted by Van der Linden as the period when the Malay author took most interest in politics and the Dutch system of government[41], such interest being particularly evident in the works of Abdullah bin Muhammad al-Misri, Abdullah Munsyi and Na Tian Piet. With the advent of the romantic novels typical of the early part of the twentieth century, Van der Linden argues that Europeans seem to disappear again from the Malay imagination. He suggests that the Malays, with a tendency to avoid the harsh aspects of daily life, turned to this new kind of literature when the reality of the European presence could no longer be avoided (1937: 21). While not using the same terminology, Van der Linden was anticipating the debate concerning the idea of a transitional literature. He sensed that there was something different and new that occurred in the writing of several of these nineteenth century writers, particularly in terms of the new approaches that Malay

[40] Sweeney bases these finding on five named texts; *Adat raja-raja Melayu, Hikayat Mareskalek, Hikayat raja-raja Siam, Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* and *Hikayat Abdullah*.
[41] In comparison to a lesser interest in the eighteenth and twentieth centuries.

writers took to Europeans. In his discussion of a 'transitional' stage between a classical and a modern literature, Skinner (1978) argued that an initial stimulus for reconsideration of traditional values was provided by the 'shock' of the contact with European colonial powers. Skinner (1978: 469) discusses various Malay writers (Lauddin, Ahmad Rijaluddin, Abdullah) who 'implicitly or explicitly reveal an awareness that there is a wider range of options open to their society than would have seemed possible to their predecessors'. He points out that this writing was not always spontaneous, and indeed was often prompted by foreigners. Although mentioning the continuities with traditional content, language, and genres, Skinner nevertheless suggests that a new type of literature was born from this contact, noting the rise of the more journalistic and individualistic styles of prose, particularly from Abdullah[42].

Two essays by Reid are particularly useful for their consideration of Southeast Asian understanding of Europeans. His essay 'Early Southeast Asian categorizations of Europeans'[43] looks at a diverse range of indigenous sources from before the nineteenth century to consider the variety of responses to the early European intrusions into the region. His essay "Heaven's will and man's fault': the rise of the West as a Southeast Asian dilemma'[44] considers two basic responses from indigenous populations to the rise of Western power in the region. On the evidence gained from a large number of indigenous texts which portray the encounter with Western powers[45], he uses the term 'revitalizers' to argue that certain societies tended to see the reasons for the rise of the West as due to moral and religious problems. The solution was to ensure true and proper adherence to the established norms of society. Contrastingly, 'borrowers' saw their predicament as 'primarily technical' and therefore sought to borrow from, or to emulate the tricks and methods of the West. For example, he sees Al-Misri as a 'borrower' for his attention to the Dutch system of government in *Hikayat Mareskalek* and Abdullah as a 'borrower', particularly with regards to understanding of Western education. In contrast, Carroll (1999) uses Reid's idea of revitalising to interpret *Hikayat Abdullah* as a revitalising text. She sees *Hikayat*

[42] The idea of the transition will be further discussed in the Conclusion.
[43] Included as chapter 8 in Reid (1999).
[44] First delivered as a lecture in 1975, but produced in chapter 12 of Reid (1999).
[45] The Malay texts considered are *Sejarah Melayu, Syair perang Mengkasar, Hikayat Perang Sabil, Babad Buleleng, Serat Dermangandul, Hikayat Mareskalek,* and the works of Abdullah Munsyi.

Abdullah as a call for the Malay people[46] to 'achieve redemption' by embracing their own reform, in order to achieve 'a return to the golden age' (1999: 107). Carroll argues that Abdullah sees the Malay people as being punished for the 'transgressions' of their Malay rajas and European governors[47].

Koster has recently given two most interesting papers which study the portrayal of the Portuguese (Koster, forthcoming a) and the Dutch (Koster, forthcoming b) in traditional Malay historiography. These papers also introduce useful theoretical ideas into the discussions of the portrayal of Europeans in traditional Malay literature, namely the concepts of 'monologism' and 'dialogism'. Koster suggests that the reaction of Malays to Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was primarily monological. He argues that, aside from description of 'colourful externality', early Malay texts 'do not manifest the least interest in examining and setting forth how the Portuguese may have come to be so mighty, how their military machine is organized. ... What in fact happens is that after a superficial gesture of reaching driven by curiosity, they shrink back from that alien "other", the white Portuguese with their *kafir* (infidel) religion, and they take refuge in the safety of their own cultural realm, that is they stick to monologue' (Koster, forthcoming a). Koster's arguments on monologue and dialogue bear similarities to some of the ideas already discussed in this section. After all, Van der Linden argued that Abdullah stood out by way of his not seeing Europeans as strange opposite people, but rather as individuals from whom the Malays could learn much. However the application of theoretical ideas facilitates the understanding of reactions towards the 'other', not just temporally within Malay literature, but also within other non-Western literatures.

[46] Carroll seems to suggest in her article that Abdullah was writing for the whole of the Malay population. This is certainly a contentious issue, for Abdullah often uses phrases to suggest his writing is aimed at a particular educated stratum of the population.

[47] These 'transgressions' will be discussed more fully in Chapter Four.

Theoretical considerations concerning the study of the *other*

The principal subject that this thesis explores is the encounter with the 'other'. The relationship of the 'self' to the 'other' can be studied on many levels, and can be taken to refer to a whole variety of groupings, interior to society, for example, adults to children, women to men, rich to poor, or exterior to society, the 'other' can be another society with languages and customs that are not understood. This study is concerned with this second situation, the arrival of an 'other' people, the British, with their different and strange customs, language, appearance, and religion in the midst of the Malay world. The idea of the meeting of cultures and the reactions and effects of such meeting has been much studied and in particular the idea of first contact is one that has attraction and interest in contemporary Western societies. The idea of unknown peoples that are still to be encountered by Europeans is deeply intriguing. The idea that there are societies on the planet that may still not understand and know about our own existence is fascinating for European cultures. In the twentieth century the mountains and valleys of New Guinea and the upper reaches of the Amazon have been sources of numerous ethnographic and anthropological studies[48] on such first encounters, or to use another terminology 'first contact' [49].

The idea of actively reaching out and making contact with a people is of course very different from the more passive situation of being contacted, and these differences have been very well discussed in Todorov's *Conquest of America: the question of the other*[50] (1992). Todorov chose to write about the conquest of America, because it was:

> ... the most astonishing encounter of our history. We do not have the same sense of radical difference in the 'discovery' of other continents and of other peoples: Europeans have never been altogether ignorant of the existence of Africa, India, or China; some memory of these places was always there already – from the beginning. (Todorov, 1992: 4)

[48] See, for example, Connolly and Anderson (1987) and Schieffelin and Crittenden (1991).
[49] Indeed this idea of first contact has also been incorporated with obvious enthusiasm into science fiction, for example in the 1999 film *Contact*, and the 1996 film *Star Trek - First Contact*. Koster (2000) has likened the description of the first meeting between Portuguese and Malays as described in *Sejarah Melayu* as rivalling the portrayal of the earthling and extra-terrestrial in Spielberg's *ET*.
[50] First published in French under the title *La Conquête de l'Amérique* in 1982.

As the above quote shows, Todorov is clearly writing here from a European perspective, for he is writing about the European conquest of / contact with / discovery of America. However his text also does much to try to understand the actions and responses of the Native Americans. Todorov also rightly suggests that long before the Europeans arrived in Asia, they had some vague imagining of that place. However a key question that will be addressed in this thesis is whether the same was true in the opposite direction. Did the Malays have some vague imagining of Europeans before they physically arrived in the region? In Chapter Three I will show that in actual fact there is little evidence for such a memory. There is clear evidence that the Malays were accustomed to encountering and trading with a large number of peoples who might be labelled 'other'. However the encounter with Europeans did not awaken old memories, but rather it led to the opportunity for new understandings and imaginings. The arrival of the British undoubtedly had less of an impact on the Malay imagination of the world, than the earlier arrival of the Portuguese. That the British followed in the footsteps of the Portuguese and the Dutch, meant to an extent that the stage had already been set. There was already knowledge of Europeans. However it is certainly the case that the arrival of the British in Malay waters led to the 'discovering' of the British by the Malays.

Todorov discusses the different attitudes apparent in the writings of various individuals, in order to compare and comprehend their understandings of the 'other'. For example, Columbus is described as someone who 'does not perceive alterity ... and he imposes his own values upon it' (1992: 50). Todorov comments that:

> There is nothing of the empiricist about Columbus: the decisive argument is an argument of authority, not of experience. He knows in advance what he will find; the concrete experience is there to illustrate a truth already possessed, not to be interrogated according to preestablished rules in order to seek the truth. (Todorov, 1992: 17)

In the above quote Todorov is identifying in Columbus the quality of monologism. Influenced by Bakhtin's ideas, Todorov has looked at how the encounter with the 'other' can be seen as either monologial or dialogical, arguing that the shift to dialogue can be understood as being closely linked to modernity. In monologue it is

evident that there is only the voice and values of the 'self'. The 'other' can only be understood within the framework of the 'self's culture. By way of contrast in dialogue, the self adapts to and seeks to learn from the 'other'[51]. Put simply there is an exchange of ideas. Understanding in the dialogical situation is based on the analysis of empirical evidence, rather than on the values and ideas of an already held belief system.

Todorov has highlighted four phases in the development of the understanding of 'other' cultures (1995: 14). The first phase consists 'of assimilating the other to oneself'. The self may be interested in other cultures, but they are seen in accordance with the self, and thus structured like the self's own culture. The second phase involves 'effacing the self for the other's benefit'. The 'self's eagerness to learn about and understand the 'other', results in the attempt to repress any manifestation of the 'self's original identity. Again 'there is only one identity; but it is the other's'. In the third phase, the 'self' resumes his own identity, having become as knowledgeable as possible about the 'other'. However the cultural exteriority is no longer regarded as problematic, but rather assists in the quality of the knowledge produced. Thus in this phase 'duality replaces unity: the "I" remains distinct from the other'. In the fourth phase, the 'self' again leaves his own temporal location. However in this case the 'self' is able to identify neither with the 'other' nor with the 'self', in this final stage an infinite process is reached which Todorov describes as follows:

> Knowledge of others depends on my own identity. But this knowledge of the other in turn determines my knowledge of myself. Since knowledge of oneself transforms the identity of this self, the entire process begins again: new knowledge of the other, new knowledge of the self and so on to infinity. (Todorov, 1995: 15)

Thus we can see that while in the first two stages the encounter is still at the level of monologue, in the third and fourth phases, the encounter becomes one marked by dialogue.

As already discussed, the monological nature of observation in traditional Malay literature has been noted by Koster in his study of early representations of the

[51] For further discussion of Bakhtin's theories of dialogism and Todorov's understanding of these concepts see Bakhtin (1981), Holquist (1990) and Todorov (1984).

Portuguese. This monologism has also been remarked upon, though in different terms, by Skinner. In his discussion of Ahmad Rijaluddin's observations on the architecture in Bengal, Skinner notes that the author's 'somewhat fanciful' descriptions of the colonial edifices in Bengal often have more in common with the ideal Malay *negeri* of traditional Malay literature, than the reality of the 'fairly ordinary' buildings in and around Calcutta. Skinner makes the important point that while European visitors to Bengal might comment on the differences between the various settlements, to Ahmad, 'these differences were less striking than the similarities' (Skinner, 1978: 476). Thus Skinner is arguing that rather than make his observations on the basis of the empirical evidence, Ahmad Rijaluddin actually describes what traditional Malay norms suggest he should be seeing. It should of course be recognised that this monologism is in no way unique or specific to traditional Malay literature, but rather it is characteristic of traditional literatures generally, including medieval European literatures, of which the writings of Columbus, discussed by Todorov (1982), are a good example.

The understanding of the shift from monologue to dialogue is essential for our understanding of the development of concepts that can be described as being modern. One of the underlying themes of this thesis will be to explore the concept of a transition from traditional literature to modern literature, as a reflection of the transformation of a traditional into a modern society. The monological, when there is only the voice and values of the 'self', can be seen as very much typical of traditional society and the traditional literature that such a society produces. Contrastingly, the dialogical exchange, with its empirical basis, and recognition of 'other' voices and values is demonstrative of many factors and attributes that might be seen as modern. Likewise, the beginnings of a shift from one system to the other can be seen as representing the transition between these two ideal types. The concept of the transition has been contested by various scholars in the field of traditional Malay literature, and the arguments over the concept, and the light such a concept can shed on our understanding of the texts which form the basis of study in this thesis will be fully discussed in the conclusion to this thesis.

A postcolonial study?

The problem of the 'other', and the reaction to, and understanding of, the 'other' has been a key aspect of the recent theoretical discussions that have been grouped under the very broad umbrella of postcolonial studies. Much of the writing on postcolonial theory, and the application of such theory in terms of reading and re-reading texts postcolonially, has focussed on the literary production of the European colonising nations, or on the literature, generally in English, produced by once-colonised people. This therefore raises questions regarding the extent to which the texts that form the basis for this study can be examined through the theoretical lens of postcolonialism. This is especially the case given the fact that they have been written by peoples living under a colonising power, prior to the period of independence and not in the language of the coloniser.

It is necessary first of all to explain how texts which were produced well before the independence of Malaysia (1957) and Indonesia (1945) can fall into the realm of postcolonial studies. The potential for confusion from the label postcolonialism seems to be almost universally agreed (Loomba, 1998). For this study it is important to stress that postcolonialism is not only concerned with states and peoples after they have gained independence. Davies (1994) has argued that there is a danger with the term postcolonial, in that it implies we are post- the period of colonialism. She counters that colonialism does not necessarily end with independence, that internal-colonialism may persist after formal independence. McLeod considers that postcolonialism does not mark a historical period, but rather it should be used for discussion of 'aesthetic practices' (2000: 33). Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin stress that postcolonialism was not only concerned with national cultures of former colonies after independence (1989: 1), but that rather the term postcolonial covers 'all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day' (1989: 2). The crucial word in this quote is 'affected'. One of the questions that must be discussed in this thesis is whether and how the colonial presence affected Malay literature. Just as colonialism can be seen as continuing after formal independence, so postcolonialism can be used to look at cultural production from the period prior to independence. In particular two possible

indications of effect that will be discussed further are the ideas of mimicry and resistance.

Central to recent scholarly analysis of European colonialism has been the concept of colonial discourse. Perhaps the most important discussion of colonial discourse has been made by Said, most notably in his groundbreaking *Orientalism*[52]. Said's study is concerned with the processes by which the Orient (meaning the Middle East) has been constructed by Western, principally British and French, thought. This process of constructing the Orient, a project which is contributed to by a whole range of influential groups including artists, politicians, writers, intellectuals and commentators, is described as the project of *Orientalism* (Said, 1995: 5). As is evident from this description of the all-encompassing phenomena of Orientalism, Said is drawing on Foucauldian ideas of discourse, with its crucial link between knowledge and power. Orientalism, as colonial discourse, became the 'Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient' (Said, 1995: 3).

Said's discussion of Orientalism establishes a somewhat polarised distinction between East and West. It is arguable that more account needs to be taken of specific instances of colonialism and the encounter between the coloniser and colonised, and the impact that such encounters can have on both sides. It is this hybridisation that has drawn the attention of scholars writing in the light of Said. Discussions concerning colonial discourse have highlighted inherent contradictions in colonialism. The concept of the 'civilizing' aim of British colonialism is contradicted by the presumption of Western cultural superiority, the conflict between nurture and exploitation. Drawing on this contradiction Bhabha introduced the idea of ambivalence into the consideration of colonial discourse, arguing that ambivalence is a key factor in the relationship between coloniser and colonised. On one level there is the ambivalence in the attitude of the colonial power. At the same time there is the ambivalence of the colonised peoples fluctuating between complicitness and resistance. Key also to the idea of ambivalence is that it disturbs the relationship between colonised and coloniser. The effort to produce co-operative compliant civilized subjects results in mimicry, but mimicry, as Bhabha argues, that is never far

[52] First published in 1978.

from mockery (Bhabha 1994: 85-92). Bhabha discusses the mimicry in terms of various phrases; 'almost the same but not quite', 'anglicised but not English', 'not quite/not white', and the slippages that occur in this mimicry actually result in a disturbance of colonial discourse. Thus in this respect mimicry does not imply that the colonised subject is disempowered. In actual fact, that mimicry, seen in the ambivalent light, can be understood as a fluctuating relationship of resistance and complicitness.

We have already seen the concept of mimicry in Todorov's second phase in the development of the understanding of the other. Bhabha has argued that mimicry should be seen as a complex process which can, whether consciously or un-consciously, imply resistance as well as complicitness. Mimicry has been discussed by numerous other theorists (see also Taussig, 1993), but Fanon's ideas concerning mimicry and resistance are particularly useful. Fanon's work on anti-colonial liberationism, and in particular his study *The wretched of the earth* (1961), is mainly concerned with the African situation and in particular the case of Algeria. However his writing has many implications which lend themselves to the consideration of the Malay situation. Fanon was particularly interested in the role of the native intellectual in anti-colonial nationalist movements. He highlighted three phases that can be seen in the writings of the native intellectual (1967: 178-179). In the first phase, the native intellectual demonstrates that he has assimilated the culture of the occupying power; 'His writings correspond point by point with those of his opposite numbers in the mother country' (1967: 178). In the second phase, 'the native is disturbed; he decides to remember what he is' (1967: 179). There is a harking back to traditional ideas, but reinterpreted 'in the light of a borrowed aestheticism and of a conception of the world which was discovered under other skies' (1967: 179). Finally in the third phase, rather than trying to be at one with the people, the native intellectual will shake the people, presenting a fighting literature and a national literature. Of most relevance for the present thesis are the first and second stages. The first phase has many similarities with the ideas of mimicry already discussed, though Fanon certainly sees nothing to indicate resistance in this attitude. Rather he sees it as symbolic of the estrangement of the intellectual from the indigenous masses, of a closer identification with the coloniser than with those not simply colonised but actually suffering from the effects

of being colonised. It is in the move away from such identification with the coloniser, that Fanon sees the beginning of resistance, even though that resistance will not be successful until there is an effort not simply to return to the traditions of the past, but actually draw on those ideas and to make them relevant to the masses who must be stirred.

Thus Fanon, Todorov and Bhabha have stressed the importance of mimicry and, while Todorov and Fanon stress the importance of moving beyond mimicry, Bhabha has highlighted how this act of copying, but not quite, must be seen in itself as a threat to the colonial order. The question for this thesis is to what extent, if at all, can glimmers of resistance be seen in Malay literary works. For example, many scholars have hinted at the anglophilic nature of Abdullah, but remembering Bhabha's reminder of anglicised but not English, such identification with the ways of the colonising power may need to be reassessed. While the new genres that arose in this period have been the focus of interest for many writers, more traditional genres also continued to be produced, though their content carries ideas that might leave them open to be interpreted in terms of resistance as well as of insularity. Questions such as these will be touched on in the chapters focussing on the texts themselves, returning for a more detailed discussion in the Conclusion.

The last important question to be addressed concerns who the texts studied in this thesis are speaking for? In the polarisation of groups which writers such as Said have tended towards, the peoples of the world tend to be separated along the lines of East and West, colonised and coloniser. Yet, obviously the picture was more complicated than this. In the Malay situation, the term colonised covers everyone from sultans down to subsistence farmers, and also covers a variety of races other than ethnic Malays. Loomba points out that 'large sections of colonised peoples in many parts of the world had no or little direct "contact" with their foreign oppressors. Yet of course their lives were materially and ideologically reshaped by the latter' (Loomba, 1998: 69). One of the unanswered questions about traditional Malay literature is connected to authorship. A large number of texts are anonymous. However we do know enough to assume that many texts originated from the courts or at least from educated sections of the population, and were most likely commissioned

by more wealthy patrons. Thus when looking at this literature care must be taken when drawing up conclusions as to the Malay view of the British, or indeed of any other issue. It may well be that the views of the elite were also shared by the wider Malay community, but it is also a factor that the elites, as Fanon warns, often have a tendency towards identification with the colonising power, such is the persuasive power of colonial discourse. Thus when theorists talk of the subaltern, it is important to remember that the colonised Malays, like any other colonised people were highly stratified. When Spivak asked the question 'can the subaltern speak?' (1985), she is not just asking if there is a voice from the colonised, but whether there is a voice from the disempowered. Just as the Subaltern Studies group of historians have argued that the historiography of Indian nationalism has been dominated by the colonial elites and then the bourgeois-nationalist elites, so too in the Malay world, one can recognise the role and importance of such indigenous elites. A question that at least needs to be borne in mind is whether the written literature produced in the Malay world projects the world view and ideas simply of the elite, or whether the voices of other groups, the voices of the people can also be heard.

The writer Munsyi Abdullah wrote about the British more than any other author in this study. Many of his views regarding the British seem to be quite ahead of his time. This raises the further question as to what extent the views of the British recorded in these texts simply reflect the views of the particular author, rather than a particular section of Malay society, let alone all Malays. Certainly Abdullah's educational background was atypical as will be discussed in Chapter Five, and taken together with his prolonged and quite intense contact with the British, seem to mark him as fairly atypical. Care will be taken in this thesis to discuss Abdullah's writings in the context of the many other Malay writers who portrayed the British, though in far less detail.

A criticism often made of postcolonial theorists is that their work has tended towards generalisations, ignoring specificities of local situations. By concentrating on the colonising power, importance and power is continuing to be heaped onto the European nations. It might be seen as a failing of those involved in area studies, that the culture and literature of colonised non-Western peoples has not tended to be

studied in terms of the impact of colonialism. Certainly in terms of Malay and Indonesian literature, studies which take a postcolonial approach, or which examine the impact of colonialism, are limited[53]. As Loomba suggests, many of the specific local details, which arguably have been ignored by the grand theorists, 'would be well within the compass of conventional "area studies" specialists, who, however, rarely work with colonialism as a theoretical parameter' (1998: xv). If theory is failing due to its neglect of the local, then it is also a failing of those primarily working in area studies for neglecting to engage with theory[54]. This aversion to working with colonialism as a theoretical parameter is not difficult to understand. Area studies can often be seen as originating out of Western colonial enterprise. Perhaps in the period since the end of formal colonialism, the desire to work with pure texts, unspoilt by colonialism, has been complemented by a denial, or at least a wish to forget, the colonialist origins of such scholarship. The aim of this thesis, which is firmly rooted in the reading of texts, is to draw on the work of cultural theorists, not only to enhance and provide more nuanced readings of the texts, but to put the reading of these texts into a theoretical framework which will assist a comparison with literatures from beyond the Malay world and Southeast Asia.

[53] While several scholars have looked at the portrayal of the Malay world in works by Western authors (for example Holden, 2000; Sherry, 1966; Hampson, 2000; Muhammad Haji Salleh, 1996), studies that reverse the gaze, or examine Malay/Indonesian writing from a postcolonial perspective are few and far between. Most notable is Foulcher and Day's edited volume (2002), though in general it is concerned with modern Indonesian literature. See also Foucher (1995). More broadly, Lombard (1996) has written at some length on the impact of the West on Javanese culture.

[54] This has recently been argued forcefully by Peter Jackson, (2003a and 2003b).

CHAPTER TWO

OVERVIEW OF THE TEXTS

We have seen that the British presence in the Malay world increased gradually from the late sixteenth century onwards, until the end of the eighteenth century when the position became consolidated with the establishment of settlements. So too, one sees occasional occurrences of British individuals or unnamed groups of British in Malay literature from the beginning of the seventeenth century, but with much more detailed and lengthy descriptions in texts dating from the beginning of the nineteenth century onwards. In preparation for more detailed discussion of specific aspects of selected texts in subsequent chapters, this chapter will present an overview of more than forty traditional Malay texts that mention the British in one way or another.

At first sight the works described in this chapter appear to be very diverse. All manner of genres and subject matter are included. While the majority of texts exist in manuscript form, there are also a number of works that were published commercially, and those early printed books fall into two further groups, lithographs and typographs. While we cannot be precise as to the dates of all the manuscripts[1], the vast majority of works included in this study come from the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries. A small number come from the eighteenth century or earlier. As I have already noted, although formal British involvement in the Malay world began in 1784, there had actually been a British presence in the region for 200 years prior to that date. The emergence of these texts featuring the British might therefore suggest a change in the Malay author's view of the world, in that it came to incorporate British outsiders soon

[1] We should of course differentiate between the dating of a manuscript, and the date of a text.

after British involvement in the Malay world became an entrenched political presence rather than a mainly trading one.

Many of these texts were written, or published in a number of specific locations in the Malay world including main centres such as Singapore, Lingga, Melaka, Batavia, Penang, and Palembang, but also locations such as Trengganu, Pahang, Johor and Aceh. Such a distribution of texts is not surprising, given the breadth of British activity in the region. These cities and ports were not just places where British traders met with local merchants, but also centres of British administration. It is noticeable that printed works tend to originate from a smaller number of settlements, indicative of the way print technology was changing literary output in the Malay world. While the number of copies of a work increased dramatically with the arrival of printing, the new technology tended to be based in the urban centres, as opposed to traditional manuscript activity that was normally centred on the palace or religious institution.

Cursory mentions of the British in early Malay texts

Before describing in some detail the traditional Malay works which feature more substantial portrayals of the British, it should be noted that there are also a number of texts which give just brief or passing reference to Britain or British individuals.

Perhaps the earliest mention of the British in any Malay text is to be found in *Hikayat Aceh*[2]. Much of *Hikayat Aceh* takes the form of a year by year account of the life of Sultan Iskandar Muda (r.1607-1636). In his tenth year the *hikayat* records the visit of two Portuguese by the names of Dong Dawis and Dong Tumis (Iskandar, 1958: 136). They bring a letter from their king and many fine gifts including two horses. The episode is discussed at some length in Chapter Three, for it seems that the two Portuguese men depicted in the *hikayat* may well have actually been British men.

[2] Editions of this text have been published by Iskandar (1958, 2001). Penth (1969) has published a German translation together with introduction to the text.

Fleeting mention of the British is to be found in various other texts. *Syair perang Menteng* (the 'Poem of Mutinghe's war'), an anonymous nineteenth century text from Sumatra, tells of the war between the inhabitants of Palembang and the Dutch forces under the Dutchman H.W.Mutinghe (Menteng). There is one mention of the British:

Di manakan jenderal hatinya senang	How could the general be happy
Ra 'yatnya mati banjak dikenang.	As he frequently remembered those who died?
Beribu mati serdadu menjelis	Thousands of handsome soldiers died
Seperti perang Jenderal Ruplis	Just as in the war of General Raffles
(Woelders, 1975: 211)	

Although the events of the war narrated in this poem did not involve the British, the memory and experience of Raffles' expeditions in the Indies can be seen to have begun to filter into the general memory of war and so into the literature of war. Woelders (1975) has published an edition of the poem based on MS V.d.Wall 272, held at the Museum Pusat, Jakarta[3].

Syair perang Mengkasar (the 'Poem of the Makassar war'), a poem concerned with the fighting between Makassar and the Dutch, written by Ence Amin in 1669 or 1670, includes four stanzas which tell of British factors in Makassar who fired on an attacking Dutch admiral (Skinner, 1963: 145). *Syair kerajaan Bima* (MS Cod. Or. 6727) (the 'Poem of the kingdom of Bima') was composed by a certain Khatib Lukman, a religious official from Bima, in around 1830 (Chambert-Loir, 1982: 73). The poem tells of events concerning Sultan Abdul Hamid and Sultan Ismail, and the eruption of Mount Tambora. The only very brief mention of the British is made in connection with assistance given by the British in the aftermath of the eruption. A similarly fleeting mention of the British is to be found in *Peringatan sejarah Negeri Johor*[4], in which a British captain is reported to have been killed in an attack by Bugis (Kratz, 1973: 73). Raffles is mentioned once in *Hikayat Siak* (Muhammad Yusoff

[3] Another recension of the poem is contained in MS Bat. Gen. 12, also held at the Museum Pusat, Jakarta (Woelders, 1975: 189).

[4] An edition of this text, together with comprehensive introduction, has been published by Kratz (1973).

Hashim, 1992: 246). In *Hikayat Johor serta Pahang*[5] (the 'History of Johor and Pahang'), a short text primarily concerned with various political intrigues in the sultanate of Johor, there is one short section which describes the arrival of Raffles in Singapore and the conversations he reportedly entered into with various local chiefs concerning his establishing a settlement there (M.A Fawzi Basri, 1983: 53).

Syair kisahnya orang wolenter Benggali (the 'Poem of the Bengali volunteers'), a poem of 90 verses, was written in Sri Lanka[6] by a Malay named Boreham[7]. The *syair* tells of the events of New Year's Day 1819, when there was an armed skirmish between the Malay soldiers of the Ceylon Malay Regiment and the Bengali soldiers of the 20th Bengali Infantry Volunteer Battalion. Despite the British being the occupying force under whom these two sides came to meet, the British actually only get three mentions, the majority of the *syair* being concerned with the actual events of the battle of that day. The only known manuscript containing this work is held at the PNM (MS 1062). An edition of the poem, together with introduction, has been published by Hussainmiya (1987).

Classification of key texts featuring the British

As a means of highlighting the variety of themes and topics of texts that mention the British, I have categorized the works into four main groups:

- **Travelogues and memoirs**
- **Historical works**
  - **Inside the Malay world**
  - **Outside the Malay world**
- **Topical works**
- **Official texts**

[5] M.A Fawzi Basri (1983) has published an edition of this text based on a microfilm held at the Singapore National library (JQ mal.3).

[6] For a discussion of Malay literary activity in Sri Lanka see B. A. Hussainmiya (1990).

[7] Hussainmiya records the Malay author's name as Boreham, but it is perhaps more likely to be transcribed as Ibrahim.

In the overview that follows, each text will be described briefly, noting details of authorship and date of composition, followed by succinct comments pertaining to the plot or topic on which the respective work is focussed. Most importantly the way in which the British are represented in particular works will be highlighted, in terms of their place in the narrative. Details of British individuals mentioned by name will be recorded. Finally the location of manuscripts will be listed together with information on any published editions that exist. With regard to printed books, brief publication details will be accompanied by details of the location of extant copies. Key studies on texts will also be noted. Within each of the four sections, texts will be discussed in chronological order.

The British in travelogues and memoirs

It is in the travelogues and memoirs that the Malay encounter with the British and their institutions is most evident. The authors of the texts included in this section either worked for British officials, as was the case with Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi, Ahmad Rijaluddin and presumably the anonymous author of *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau*, or they worked for Malay rulers in positions which brought them into close contact with the British, such as Ibrahim Mohamed Munsyi, Lauddin and Mohammad Salleh bin Perang.

Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi, author of three works described below, wrote extensively on his experiences and observations gained from working for a variety of British individuals in Singapore, as a teacher of Malay, a translator and a secretary. He worked under Raffles and Crawfurd, and also the missionaries North and Keasberry. Of all the Malay literature from the nineteenth century it is undoubtedly the works of Abdullah, particularly his autobiography *Hikayat Abdullah*, that are most concerned with the British. Not only do his relationships with certain British officials form the focus of much of his writing, but it was also apparently on the suggestion of British friends that Abdullah actually wrote several of his works (Datoek Besar & Roolvink, 1953: 1).

While Abdullah has been described as the father of modern Malay literature (e.g. Zaaba: 1939 and Skinner: 1959), some scholars have taken the view that his postulated audience was a Western one (Sweeney, 1980b: 16; Ungku Maimunah Mohd. Tahir, 2000: 102). An important question that will be considered in this thesis is whether these writers who apparently put pen to paper on the suggestion of Europeans should automatically be seen as writing with a Western audience in mind. Furthermore even if they intended to write for a Western audience, did they actually produce texts that would meet Western ideas and expectations? Rather than falling into the trap of a 'Western equates to modern and Eastern equates to traditional' framework, an alternative when considering postulated audiences is whether authors and particularly Abdullah were writing for a modern local audience, even if that audience was only beginning to emerge at his time of writing.

Like Abdullah, Ahmad Rijaluddin, author of *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala,* worked as a translator, interpreter and language teacher to Europeans, though in the settlement of Penang. While he probably never worked for Raffles, Ahmad was undoubtedly well acquainted with him (Skinner, 1982: 9). It is probable too that Ahmad wrote his *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* on the suggestion of a British individual, and Skinner suggests that his postulated audience was British (Skinner, 1982: 1) However, Ahmad retains many of the approaches and conventions of the traditional Malay *hikayat* in his work.

Perhaps the aspect of these texts which is most promising for the purposes of this study is the comparative approach taken by many of the authors. By working within two different cultures, Malay and colonial British, these writers were among those best placed to reflect upon the nature of 'Malayness' and 'Britishness', and the similarities and differences between them. But these differences were not simply those of language, attire and aesthetic taste, but more fundamentally, the difference was between the modern British and the traditional Malays. It is this contrast between modern and traditional systems that often draws the gaze of the various authors. It is noticeable that such obvious symbols of modernity as the steamship, gas lighting and

the printing press all attract the attention of the writers of the texts below, and this portrayal of new technologies is a theme I will develop more fully in Chapter Five.

Hikayat Nakhoda Muda

Hikayat Nakhoda Muda (the 'Tale of Nakhoda Muda') was written by Lauddin, son of Nakhoda Muda, some time before 1788[8]. Lauddin came from the west of Sumatra, and wrote the *hikayat*, or at least the version of MS 40323, at the request of the British agent in Lais, near Bengkulu, Mr Butter Hunnings (Drewes, 1961: 1). *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* tells the story of three generations of a Minangkabau family of pepper traders who eventually settled in Lampung. The larger part of the narrative records the important happenings in the life of Nakhoda Muda, who rose to a position of some importance under the sultan of Lampung. The geographical centre of these events was Semangka, which was ruled by Nakhoda Muda's father Kyai Demang with the authority of the sultan and Dutch governor of Bantam. Of key interest for the purposes of this study are the reasons that forced Kyai Demang and his family to leave their settlement and seek the protection of the British.

The visit by a British ship, captained by Thomas Forrest, led the Dutch to accuse the local ruler of selling pepper to the British, resulting in his detention. The local population then sought to release Kyai Demang, killing the Dutch soldiers in the process. They then fled to Kerui, to seek the protection of the British resident. The request was passed to Governor Carter and the council at Bengkulu and the *hikayat* details the deliberations made by Carter. Also listed are other members of the council, Wyatt, Darval, Hay, Nairne and Stuart. Lauddin gives useful insight into the Dutch/British antagonisms of the period, and the manner in which local rulers tried to steer their way around these difficulties. Undoubtedly the author presents the British in a far better light than the Dutch.

The only known manuscript of this work is held in the Marsden collection (SOAS MS 40323). Marsden published its translation in 1830. Drewes published an

[8] This is the date when the manuscript held in the Marsden Collection (SOAS 40323) was copied. Hadijah Rahmat (2001;143) agrees with Marsden (1830: 84), that the text was actually written much earlier, though no actual date is suggested.

edition of the work, together with an introduction, in 1961. The text has been discussed at some length by Hadijah Rahmat (2001).

Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala

*Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala (*the 'Tale of the State of Bengal'), a prose work written by Ahmad Rijaluddin, is a record of the author's visit to Calcutta in 1810. According to the opening of the account, Ahmad wrote this *hikayat* in 1811.

This work is of particular interest, for it gives an account of a Malay man leaving the Malay world to visit Bengal, the very centre of the British administration in Asia. Not only was Ahmad presented with the opportunity to reflect on the Malay world from outside, he was also able to see the operations of the British empire in another setting. The work tells us much about the Malay author's understanding of the nature and organisation of British power in India and the wider empire and throughout the text we are given various observations on both British and Indian peoples.

In addition to this main part of the text which records the author's experiences in Bengal, there is also a short section at the end of the text describing various military operations undertaken against French colonies in 1810, up to and including the early part of the campaign against Java of 1811, thus forming a useful comparison with *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi,* a *syair* narrating the events of the invasion of Java, which will be detailed later in this chapter.

A number of British individuals are mentioned in the text, though many of the observations made concern unnamed individuals or anonymous groups of people, *orang Inglan* or *puteri Inglan.* The British individuals mentioned by personal name or title are *Raja Cicuda* (the British administrator of Chinsura), *Kapitan Eskat* (William Scott), *Robart Eskat* (Robert Scott), *Raja Inglan* or *Yang di pertuan Yuropa* (the king of England or the ruler of Europe), *Raja Inglan Hugli* (the British administrator of Hugli), *Raja Lord Minto* or *Raja Benggala* or *Raja Kalkata* (Lord Minto, the

governor-general of India), *Raja Pulau Pinang* (the governor of Pinang) and *Mistar Raful* (Mr Raffles)[9].

There is only one known manuscript of this text, which is held at the BL (Add. 12386). Skinner published an edition of the text together with a translation into English (Skinner, 1982), and also discusses the text in a special article (Skinner, 1978). Hadijah Rahmat (2001) discusses the text, particularly its conventional aspects, at some length, and Salmon (1999) makes a most interesting comparison between Ahmad's depiction of Bengal and the representation of that city by the early nineteenth century Vietnamese writer Li Van Phuc. Most importantly this text has been a major source in the discussion of the concept of the 'transition' from traditional to modern literature in the Malay world (Skinner, 1978; Kratz, 1985; Ras, 1985; Matheson, 1983).

Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau

This anonymous *syair*, of about 150 quatrains, tells of the trip to Padang and the journey made into the interior of western Sumatra by Raffles, accompanied by his wife[10]. The poem is described in English as a 'Poem in the Malay language descriptive of the journey of the lieutenant governor to Menangcabow in 1818'. The *syair* must have been written sometime between 1818 and 1820, the year of publication.

Raffles had arrived in Bengkulu on 22 March 1818 to take up his new position of lieutenant-governor for the EIC. Shortly afterwards he went on an expedition in the Minangkabau region

Sedikit lama perantaraan	Not long afterwards
Tuan besar itu hendak berjalan	The high dignitary wished to go on a journey
Serta madamnya yang arif budiman	Along with his wife, learned and clever,
Ke negeri Padang dia-nya kerjaan.	To the country of Padang.

(Raimy Ché-Ross, 2003; 38)

[9] A full list of personal names occurring in *Hikayat perintah Negeri Bengala* is included in Skinner (1982: 185).

[10] Thanks are due to Annabel Gallop for introducing me to this text, and also for sharing her unpublished transcription of the poem.

A large part of the poem is taken up with descriptions of where Raffles went, how he got there, and also the invariably favourable reaction of the local people and rulers to the British visitors. Apart from Raffles and his wife, who is referred to generally as *madam*, the only other British individual named is *Tuan Saman*, Captain Francis Salmond, a close friend and colleague of Raffles (Boulger, 1999; 286-7).

The *syair* was published in Jawi script in 1820, in the first volume of the early journal *Malayan Miscellanies*, and as such it may well be the first *syair* ever to be published (Raimy Ché-Ross, 2003: 25). An edition of the poem, together with an English summary of the text and introductory comments has been published by Raimy Ché-Ross (2003).

Kisah pelayaran Abdullah

Kisah pelayaran Abdullah (the 'Voyage of Abdullah') was written by Abdullah in 1838, thus two years before he started work on his most famous work *Hikayat Abdullah.* The travelogue is an account of Abdullah's voyage to the east coast of the Malay Peninsula, namely Kelantan and Trengganu. Because of war in Kelantan, the raja there had detained several ships, and Abdullah went as an interpreter to the British man Grandpré, who acting on behalf of a group of British merchants from Singapore sought the release of the ships. For the purposes of this study the text is perhaps less interesting as the travelogue portrays the various Malay states visited by Abdullah, rather than the colonial centres of Melaka and Singapore described in his autobiography. However, the anglophile Abdullah constantly makes comparisons between his experiences in the Malay states he visits, and the Straits Settlements he apparently prefers. Thus while the realities described are Malay, we are also given Abdullah's understanding of the contrasting British system. For example, Abdullah, with his particular interest in language and teaching, expresses constant despair at the attitude of the Malays towards education (Kassim Ahmad, 1981, 13-14).

Kisah pelayaran Abdullah was first published in Singapore in parallel Jawi and Rumi texts in 1838. Further Jawi editions were published by Pijnappel (1855) and by Klinkert (1889). A Rumi edition based on these two editions was published by

Kassim Ahmad (1960)[11], and Coope published an English translation (1949). As Proudfoot[12] notes, Kassim Ahmad's 'source text is unfortunate: the earlier Singapore publication would have provided more authoritative versions', and an edition based on the earlier Singapore publication is currently being prepared by Sweeney.

Cerita kapal asap.

Cerita kapal asap (the 'Story of the steamship') was written by Abdullah following his tour of one of the first steamships to arrive in Singapore, the *Sesostris*, on 3 August 1841. The short account is full of descriptions of the technology he saw on board the ship, such as the engines themselves, the cannons, even the lavatories. Abdullah reports that his mood on leaving the ship after his tour was one of wonder and amazement (Abdullah, 1843: p.12). Abdullah does not mention any British individuals by name in this short account, but he does refer to his companions for the day as British gentlemen (*Tuan-tuan Inggris*) and friends (*sahabatku*). The crew of the ship is portrayed as most welcoming and courteous, and even the British sailors are described with some wonder (Abdullah, 1843: 10).

Cerita kapal asap was first published (1841) in a volume together with an appendix concerning the various uses of steam, and steam engines etc. by Alfred North[13]. A later edition published in 1843 comprised only a romanised version of Abdullah's text. The 1843 version is reproduced, together with a translation and short introduction in Gallop (1989). Copies of both editions are held at the BL.

Hikayat Abdullah

Hikayat Abdullah was written by Abdullah between October 1840 and May 1843, with further additions made before the first edition was published in 1847.

In this long work of twenty-six chapters, Abdullah records not only many details of his own life, for example his family background and the nature of his

[11] A second edition was published in 1981.

[12] <MCP> <http://www.anu.edu/asianstudies/mcp/N/PAK_2_bib.html> 18 May 2004.

[13] The fact that these technical details were also included in the publication surely suggests that the intended audience for the work was Malay speaking. Certainly no Western audience would need such information in Malay when it was already freely available in English.

schooling, but he also describes the founding and early days of Singapore. He gives many insights into Raffles' time in Singapore, as well as numerous other colonial administrators and missionaries. He describes enthusiastically the new ideas brought to Singapore and the Malay world by the British. Indeed these new ways of thinking and behaviour are often espoused to the detriment of what are sometimes described by Abdullah as rather primitive Malay ideas and customs.

Abdullah has been criticised by some scholars for what might be seen as his rejection of Malay traditions and his positive attitude towards the colonial power. He was very much aware of, and excited by, the dramatic changes that the British were bringing to the Malay world. He thrived on the new scientific advances and the scientific explanations for natural phenomena, which had hitherto been explained by what he saw as irrational and unsubstantiated folklore. It is perhaps best to see Abdullah as a man very much at the centre of this change, not from a Malay world to a British colonial world, but rather from a traditional to a modern world:

> **Adapun segala perkara yang tersebut inilah menjadi heran aku oleh sebab melihat keubahan dunia ini dengan kenyataan adanya. Dari pada tiada diadakan. Dari pada ada ditidakkan. Bahwa hutan menjadi negeri dan negeri menjadi hutan.** (Datoek Besar and Roolivnk, 1953; 202)
>
> As for the things I have mentioned above, I am astonished to see the marked changes in the world. What had never existed came into existence. What had existed ceased to exist. The jungle becomes a city, while elsewhere the city reverts to jungle.

A large number of British individuals are described in the narrative including twenty men to whom he taught Malay, though he states that in actual fact the number of British and French men he taught Malay must amount to hundreds of individuals. Mention is made of many people he met through his work with the missionary societies, in particular Keasberry, North and Milne. High ranking colonial officials such as Minto, Crawfurd, and Farquhar are referred to on numerous occasions, and we are left in no doubt of the close bond that Abdullah felt with Raffles, by the many pages devoted to the founder of Singapore.

It seems the first edition of *Hikayat Abdullah* was revised on the advice of Keasberry and his colleagues at the mission in Singapore, and that some additions

were also made. The Mission Press published a lithographed version of the work in 1849, and this version became the prototype of later editions which were published by Lim Kong Chuan in Singapore in 1880, Brill of Leiden in 1882, and the Singapore Government Press in 1888. A partial translation of the text into English was published by Thomson (1874). This translation has been superseded by Hill (1970), though Hill's translation must also be read with caution[14]. There are numerous studies and articles about various aspects of *Hikayat Abdullah.* Ungku Maimunah Mohd. Tahir (2000) has traced the interest taken in the work by Western scholars and the creation of the notion of Abdullah as the father of modern Malay Literature. Other discussions of the work of Abdullah of note are Wilkinson (1907), Zaaba (1939), Skinner (1959) and Winstedt (1991).

Kisah pelayaran Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi

This prose work was apparently completed by Ibrahim Mohamed Munsyi in the year 1872 (Sweeney and Phillips, 1975: xxxii). In writing *Kisah pelayaran Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi* (the 'Voyages of Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi'), Ibrahim, son of Abdullah, was apparently influenced not just by the name of his father's travelogue, the *Kisah pelayaran Abdullah*, but also by its style and format. Ibrahim's description of five voyages to different parts of the Malay Peninsula lends a useful Malay perspective to our understanding of British society and institutions, together with political and historical events that occurred in the Malay world at the beginning of the 1870's.

The five voyages recounted in this work took Ibrahim to the British centres of Melaka and Penang, as well as the Malay states of Selangor, Perak and Johor. His travels were all on official business, but Ibrahim's comments are not restricted to the main purpose of the voyages. He also recounts at length the situations he encountered, the social conditions of the population in the different places he visited, and the people he met and had dealings with. He also makes interesting comparisons between the three British settlements. Ibrahim refers to a number of British individuals, often in some detail. C. Irving (Straits auditor-general) is mentioned on numerous

[14] The current author's translations of quotes from *Hikayat Abdullah* have often drawn on Hill (1970), and these references to Hill are noted accordingly throughout the body of this thesis.

occasions, and others mentioned in the work are: J.W. Birch (colonial secretary), J. McNair (later lieutenant-governor of Perak), Sir Harry Ord (governor of the Straits Settlements), F. Playfair (acting-resident in Melaka), E.Shaw (lieutenant-governor of Melaka), Dudley Hervey and Alan Skinner (colonial office cadets in Straits Civil Service).

While Abdullah, Ibrahim's father, worked for the British for much of his career, Ibrahim was in the employment of Abu Bakar, the Maharaja and later Sultan of Johor. Thus while Ibrahim was well acquainted with the ways of the British, teaching Malay to several Europeans, his loyalty was to his sultan. This is perhaps the reason that Ibrahim is generally seen as being less anglophilic than his father, though at the same time, never questioning the superiority of the British (Sweeney and Phillips, 1975: xxvii).

It would seem that the text was written in 1872, for, as Sweeney and Phillips note (1975: xxxii), there are no references to events after that year in the text, with the exception of the translation of the 1874 Pangkor Engagement, presumably added later. The work was not published until 1919, under the auspices of Sultan Ibrahim of Johor. It seems that the original manuscript is no longer extant (Sweeney and Phillips, 1975: xxxiii). The text was printed for the second time in 1956 on the initiative of Dato' Abdullah bin Mohamed, state secretary of Johor, at the Johor State Printing Office. A new romanised edition of the 1919 text was published by Mohd. Fadzil Ibrahim (1980). Sweeney and Phillips (1975) published an annotated translation of the 1919 text[15].

Tarikh Datuk Bentara Luar Johor

Tarikh Datuk Bentara Luar Johor (the 'Writings of the Datuk Bentara Luar Johor') consists of three works by Mohammad Salleh bin Perang, the Datuk Bentara Luar Johor (1841-1915) (Sweeney, 1980b: vii). The first of the three texts is Salleh's account of the important events in his life, written shortly before his death in 1915. The second text is in the form of a letter written in 1894 to his friend Na Tian Piet.

[15] The current author's translations of quotes from this text have often drawn on Sweeney and Phillips (1975).

The third text is an account of Salleh's trips to Japan and China, written in the form of a diary in 1883.

In the first section, several British individuals are mentioned, along with various offices and functions of the British administrative system. Mr Hervey, the resident of Melaka, Mr Townley, district-officer in Temerluh, Pahang, Mr Campbell, adviser to the sultan of Johor, and Datuk Galloway, Sultan Ibrahim's doctor. It is also noticeable that throughout the text, Mohammad Salleh bin Perang records the name of most of the ships, or on occasion the name of the company owning the ship.

The second section in the form of a letter, gives an account of the lineage of Datuk Bentara Luar, together with details of his biography, the founding of Johor Baru and also the Jenemtah war. It is in this second section that we learn that the author was taught by Encik Abdullah (Abdullah bin Abdul Kadir Munsyi), and of the recommendation made by Abdullah to Mr Keasberry regarding the author's ability to be a teacher of Malay. While general references are made to the British government and to Europeans, no particular individuals are named.

The third section, concerning the trip to Japan and China, includes a very brief description of Hong Kong, including mention of the British consul, and also a Mr Thomas Ross-Smith. Also it seems that in China and Japan, the party occasionally met British officials and such meetings with Mr Drummond and Mr Hook in Shanghai, Mr Hall in Nagasaki, and Sir Harry Parkes in Yokohama are duly recorded.

The work was published posthumously by Mohammed bin Haji Alias in 1928. This Jawi edition was printed by al-Attas Press, Singapore. The text has been translated into English and published, together with an introduction, by Sweeney (1980b)[16]. Sweeney has also published a separate annotated transcription of the text (1980c).

[16] The current author's translations of quotes from this text have often drawn on Sweeney (1980b).

Syair Tuan Hampris

Syair Tuan Hampris (the 'Poem of Mr Humphreys') was written by Hajah Wok Aisyah binti al-Haji Nik Idris in January 1928 and published as a printed book in October of the same year. The author records that she was a resident of Sea View Cottage in Terengganu. Hajah Wok Aisyah, born in 1883, was 45 when she wrote the text, and was married to a notable member of Terengganu society, Haji Busu bin Noh (Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1983: 29). This poem of 232 stanzas, somewhat panegyric in nature, is concerned mainly with John Lisseter Humphreys, colonial official in Terengganu 1915-1925. As well as detailing his various qualities, the various changes he brought about in Terengganu are enumerated. The *syair* also devotes a small number of verses to the Terengganu Sultan, Zainal Abidin III.

The only British individual mentioned in the *syair* by name is Humphreys, who was agent (*wakil*) in Terengganu from November 1915-May 1919, and then adviser (*penasihat*), following the signing of the *Perjanjian Terengganu-Inggeris* in 1919. The author generally paints him in the traditional image of a Malay ruler, though with some more factual detail in the case of his education. In addition, certain notable events in his life from the period are related, such as the sinking of a sampan on which he was travelling, the attack of a tiger which he overcame, his period of leave in England and particularly interesting, the nature of snow and the measures that the people of London needed to take in order to cope with the six months of cold weather.

The cover page of the printed book tells us that the text was printed by Matba'ah al-Ahliyyah of Kampung Daik, Terengganu on 22 October 1928[17]. Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1983) has published an edition of the text, together with a fairly general introduction.

[17] A copy of the cover page is in Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1983: 42). It is unclear from Muhammad Yusoff Hashim's article where extant copies of the text are held. It seems that he used a copy from the private collection of Misbaha and family for the purposes of his edition.

Texts on the life of Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor

There are three texts of note which relate various aspects of the life of the Johor Sultan Abu Bakar; *Hikayat Johor dan Tawarikh al-Marhum Sultan Abu Bakar*, *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar* and *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor*.

Hikayat Johor dan Tawarikh al-Marhum Sultan Abu Bakar (the 'Tale of Johor and the history of the late Sultan Abu Bakar') was written by Dato Haji Muhammad Said bin Haji Sulaiman in 1911[18]. The author, who was private secretary to the sultan of Johor (Proudfoot, 1993: 290), tells of the history of Johor since its founding by Sultan Abu Bakar. The various journeys to Europe undertaken by the sultan are described, as are the visits by prominent men to the Malay sultanate, together with other key events during the sultan's reign. The text of 76 pages was produced in typeset Jawi. Three editions (1911, 1916, 1920) were published (Proudfoot, 1993: 290). Copies of all three editions are held at the BL.

Syair Sultan Abu Bakar[19] (the 'Poem of Sultan Abu Bakar'), a poem of 1029 quatrains was, 'written by someone of mixed race from Lingga who had become resident in Pahang' (*dikarang oleh seorang peranakan Lingga yang berkelana di Pahang*) in 1899. The poem opens with a description of the greatness of Johor and its sultan and also a long list of the ministers and advisers, including two who had been awarded the C.M.G.[20] by Queen Victoria. Details of the visit of Queen Victoria's second son to Johor are also recounted, as are some details of a visit by an Italian

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[18] An entry in the Straits Times, 11 January 1912 states: 'The history of the late Sultan Abubakar of Johor is related for the first time, we understand, in a small volume written in Arabic Malay by Hadji Mohd. Said bin Hadji Sulaiman and just published by the Methodist Printing Press. The author is in a position to know his subject well. He holds the post of private secretary to H.H. the present sultan and he will be remembered by Malay scholars as the translator of A Life of Queen Victoria. In this present history he culls his material from reminiscenses and reliable notes and books. He describes briefly the history of Johor, the seat of government of which was first established at Johor Lama; and traces the descent of many of the ruling rajahs of the Malay states from Dato Sri Maharaja Bendahara Padang Saujana Johor. He also deals with the transfer of Singapore to the British by Sultan Hussain and with the change in the ruling house of Johor. The life of the late Sultan Abubakar is very capably and comprehensively written. Altogether this litle book should prove of considerable interest to educated Malays and others interested in Malay history.'

[19] This is referred to as *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar* by M.A. Fawsi Basri (1983), as *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar ibni Sultan Ibrahim Johor* by Ismail Hussein (1976) and as *Shair Sultan Abu Bakar Karya Kelana Lingga di Negeri Pahang* by Noriah Mohamed (2001).

[20] Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.

royal. A large part of the poem is given over to the relations between Johor and Pahang. Reference is made to a treaty between the British queen and Johor, the arrival of a resident and the change in the laws of the sultanate. Of particular interest is the description of the sultan's trips to England and also to other countries and foreign cities, including Istanbul. He also established friendships with princes from Germany, Italy and Russia (*Banyaklah raja menjadi taulan / Jerman Italy dan Russian*). It is reported that on his return to Johor after a trip overseas, the sultan fell ill and thus returned to London for a change of air, where he died.

A handwritten Jawi Manuscript of the text is held at the PUM, and is recorded by Ismail Hussein as 'Manuscript 10' (1976: 306). The poem has been summarised and discussed briefly by Ismail Hussain (1976). An edition of the poem has been published by M.A. Fawsi Basri (1983), together with a general introduction.

Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor (the 'Poem of His Majesty, the late Sultan Abu Bakar of the State of Johor'), a poem of 1400 quatrains, was written by Na Tian Piet[21] and published in 1896. Unlike the poem discussed immediately above, this poem is not concerned with events in Pahang and is far more focussed on the rule of Sultan Abu Bakar, describing the greatness of the sultanate, the strength of Islam in Johor and the various travels of Abu Bakar including those to England and to China.

After Abdullah's works, it is perhaps the text in which the British earn most mentions. It is of no surprise that a text about Abu Bakar should have so many connections with the British, considering his many visits to England, and also the number of British visitors he received. That Abu Bakar visited Europe five times is repeated at various stages throughout the *syair,* and each of those visits is recorded separately, though considering the number of verses devoted to these visits, the actual detail is minimal. Generally we are told simply of meetings and dinners with Queen Victoria and the Prince of Wales. However the only definite reference to a location in

[21] Na Tian Piet, as his name would suggest, was of Chinese descent. He was born in Bengkulu and lived in Aceh, Riau, Deli and finally Singapore. He is best known for his writings in *Penberita Betawi,* in which he wrote under the pseudonym *kalam langit.* For further information on his known background see Sweeney (1980b: 26-31) and Noriah Mohamed (2001: xiv-xxii). He was also of course the friend to whom Mohammed Salleh bin Perang wrote his letter giving an account of his life.

Britain, aside from London, is the Baily Hotel, where Sultan Abu Bakar died during his fifth visit.

Of particular note with regard to the portrayal of the British, are verses recording the death of Benjamin Keasberry and the visits of various sons of Queen Victoria. Also incorporated into the *syair* is a list of more than forty named British officials, together with named consuls and representatives of sixteen different countries who attended the state funeral. The qualities of Queen Victoria are returned to on several occasions though principally with the aim of showing her love for and friendship with the Johor sultan.

Copies of the book are held at the KITLV, RUL and BL (Proudfoot, 1993: 484). Noriah Mohamed (2001) has published an edition of the text with its original spelling and also with modern Malay spelling, together with a general introduction. The first one hundred stanzas of the poem have been translated into English by Wignesan (1999).

The British in Malay historical works

Perhaps unsurprisingly, many of the texts mentioning the British are what one might loosely describe as historical texts. This category includes prose texts, *hikayat*, that present the chronicles of a particular sultanate, and works of poetry, *syair,* which generally relate the events of specific battles and wars, and the heroes who fought in them. The historical works have been divided into two categories; those narrating or focussing on events that occurred within the Malay world, and those narrating events that occurred outside the Malay world. The main reason for this division is that this differentiation allows us to examine one of the main issues of the thesis. How the Malay author understood the British was very much based on his personal experience, and also the availability of written sources. Such contact may have been in the form of direct encounter with the British administrative system and British individuals, and certainly in most, if not all, of the works which feature the British in the first category, this first-hand experience, is to the fore. However in the second group, looking at events outside the Malay world, the first hand experience, the eyewitness account,

disappears. Instead the Malay author becomes totally reliant on secondary sources for his information. Obviously, the traditional author writing a chronicle of his patron's dynasty would also have been dependent on secondary sources, making use of earlier written chronicles, as well as the oral accounts of his forefathers. But in the case of those works looking outside of the Malay world, the secondary sources were somewhat different. As Braginsky notes in his study of *Hikayat peperangan al-Maulana Sultan Istambul*, the anonymous author of the text mentions his sources for the work as being Egyptian, Indian, Persian and British newspapers, as well as the oral stories of a Turkish man who visited Pulau Penang in 1877 (Braginsky, 1996: 412). This text is apparently not unique in having foreign newspaper reports as a source of information.

Regarding the historical works concerning various Malay sultanates and dynasties, perhaps most interesting is to consider at what chronological point the British first enter a given narrative. Often the first episodes recording the British presence in the historical works do not tally with the dates when we know the British first arrived in the Malay Peninsula, or became known in the particular sultanate. Worsley discussed such a phenomenon in his study of the Balinese text *Babad Buleleng* (Worsley, 1972: 8), where he noted that the Dutch only began to feature in that dynastic chronicle at the point in the narrative when their presence actually had an impact on the legitimacy of the dynasty. In the case of the Malay chronicles, a consideration of the reasons that the British are mentioned, and at what point they are mentioned, will, I hope, shed further light on the Malay attitude to, and understanding of, the British presence in the Malay world.

Inside the Malay world

Syair Kompeni Welanda berperang dengan Cina

Syair Kompeni Welanda berperang dengan Cina (the 'Poem of the war between the Dutch Company and the Chinese'), 1780 verses in length, was composed by a poet from Banjarmasin named Abdurahman. The *syair* is also referred to as *Syair Hemop*, after the Dutch governor-general of the East Indies, Van Imhoff. It is one of the earliest known historical *syair*. The poem tells of the events of Chinese riots in

Batavia of 1740, and the war fought between the Dutch VOC and the Madurese ruler Cakraningrat. Thus the main part of the text is concerned with Dutch individuals and armies.

The British do get various mentions however. Very near the beginning of the poem we are told of the variety of races that traded in Batavia including people from Britain, Portugal, Switzerland, Germany, Muscat and Cochin China (Rusconi, 1935: 20). Towards the end of the poem we are told of the sending of the Prince of Madura's daughter-in-law to British Bengkulu (Rusconi, 1935: 91) and in the closing pages there is also an episode involving a British ship and its unnamed captain (Rusconi, 1935: 104-5). The last mention is of a cunning and clever British man who finds some hidden treasure on the island of Sirih (Rusconi, 1935: 105).

Three manuscripts of the work are known to exist. One in the RUL (MS. Cod. Or. 2095), one at the RAS (MS. Farquhar 3) and one is held in the Bibliotheque Nationale Paris (MS. Mal-pol 107). An edition of this work has been published by Rusconi (1935).

Misa Melayu

The *Misa Melayu* was written in the latter half of the eighteenth century by Raja Culan, a nephew of the sultan of Perak. While undoubtedly falling into the genre of historical chronicle, it also has an element of the fantastic adventure *hikayat* (Braginsky, 1998: 270). The text, which is mainly in prose form, is notable for the very long *syair* of about 400 verses towards the end of the work. Near the end of that *syair* we are told of an event concerning the meeting of the captain of a British ship with various representatives of the sultan, and the agreement to buy two cannons from the British. Of interest here is the fact that the author mentions the need of a *juru bahasa* in order to communicate, and the different sound of the English language:

Telah bertemu dengannya Inggeris	After meeting with the British
Sekaliannya naik bersiap keris	All of them boarded, daggers at the ready
Ia berbahasa cherus-cheris	They spoke in a strange accent
Disuruhnya duduk sama sebaris.	And were ordered to sit together in a row.

(Raja Chulan, 1962: 165)

It is important to note that in this short passage, the British are presented as equals of the officials from Perak. They eat together, sit together and both the sultan of Perak and the British captain are pleased by the brief trading encounter that follows.

Various versions of the work are known to exist[22]. There are two published editions of the work. The earlier edition was prepared by Winstedt in 1919 and then republished (1962). More recently, an edition has been published by Ahmad Fauzi Mohd. Basri (1992).

Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi

This anonymous *syair* of about 500 verses in length was, according to its colophon, completed on 12 *Muharam* 1231 (14 December 1815). *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* (the 'Poem of the British war on Batavia') can be divided into two parts. The first and longer part tells of the British invasion of Java in 1811 together with the events immediately prior to the attack. The second and shorter section comprises an account of the founding of a market at Pintu Kecil in Batavia, and a lengthy description of all the produce and activities to be experienced there.

Reference is made to three British individuals; Raffles, Lord Minto and Lieutenant-General Samuel Auchmuty. Of particular note in this text is the lengthy section which extols the virtues of Raffles, who is very much viewed by the author as being the cause of a much-needed revival of the city of Batavia. In addition to the Dutchmen Marshal Herman William Daendels, (governor-general of the East Indies, 1808-1811) and General Jan William Janssens, (governor-general of the East Indies, 1811), mention is also made of Jacob Cranssen, the only Dutch councillor who was retained by Raffles during the British administration.

Two complete manuscripts of this work are known to exist. The manuscript used for this study is held at the RAS (Raffles Malay 78). A second manuscript, held in Paris, is a copy of the RAS manuscript made by Dulaurier (Voorhoeve, 1973: 43).

[22] See Ahmad Fauzi Mohd. Basri (1992) for a full discussion of the various manuscripts containing *Misa Melayu*, or other works which have clear links to *Misa Melayu*.

Various aspects of the work have been discussed by Zubir Idris (1996) and Murtagh (2002). An edition of the text is being prepared by the present author.

Syair Inggeris menyerang kota

Syair Inggeris menyerang kota (the 'Poem of the British attack on the fort') is an anonymous poem of just over four hundred lines. The poem tells of the British invasion of Batavia and their ensuing movements around Java. Indeed the second part of the poem is little more than a list of places in Java. By way of contrast with *Syair perang Inggris di Betawi,* no Britons are actually named in the text.

Only one copy of this text is known to exist. It is hand written in Rumi letters and in a rather poor state of repair. The manuscript is held at the PNRI (ML 153). The poem has apparently been confused with *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* by certain scholars, but the two texts are completely different. The present author is preparing an edition of the poem.

Syair Mukomuko

This *syair* of 245 verses was composed by Raden Anom Zainal Abidin, probably between 1810 and 1816 (Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: 36).

Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim suggest that *Syair Mukomuko* was composed as a court chronicle. While this *syair* does tell of various historical events from the foundation of the Mukomuko sultanate up to the rebellion of Tuanku Muda Zainal Abidin and the repercussions of the long drawn out civil war, the subject proper of the *syair* is actually the death and burial of the sultan's youngest daughter Puteri Benialam. (Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: 23).

The only mention made of the British in the work is in verses 36 to 63, in the section dealing with the civil war, when Tuanku Muda launched an attack on

Mukomuko. Following an appeal made to the EIC in Bengkulu, British forces comprising sepoys and Bugis under the command of Captain Hamilton (*Kaptin Hamtyn*) arrived to support the sultan against the rebellion. The picture we are given in this section regarding the British is limited, though it is evident that the British Captain Hamilton is held in some regard: (Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: 54). We also see that the reason the rebellion's leader loses his resolve is a result of the strength of the Company:

Baginda [Tuanku Muda] pun fikir di dalam hati	Tuanku Muda thought to himself
'Tiadalah berlawan parang Company'	'I cannot fight against the Company'
(Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: 54)	

Apart from this, we are told little about the relationship between the Minangkabau and the British and other than Hamilton, no other British individual is mentioned in this *syair*.

There is only one complete manuscript known to exist, which is held at the RUL (MS. Cod. Or. 6051). In addition to this there is a fragment of only 70 verses in a manuscript also held at the RUL (MS. Cod. Or. 5976). A fully annotated transcription of the text, together with a partial translation into English, has been published by Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1985).

Cerita Siam

Cerita Siam (the 'Story of Siam'), which is almost the same (Zaini-Lajoubert, 1987: 13) as *Hikayat raja-raja Siam* (the 'Tale of the rulers of Siam'), was written by Syeikh Abdullah bin Muhammad Abu Bakar bin Syeikh Ibrahim al-Misri in 1823 or 1824[23]. The manuscript of *Cerita Siam* is 40 pages in length, but for the purposes of this study, we are interested in one particular section which gives an account of two embassies to Siam made by the British. Both embassies went badly. The first embassy resulted in disappointment, as a result of Crawfurd, the British representative, not

[23] For an explanation for the confusion over the date of the work see: Zaini -Lajoubert, 1987: 83.

understanding the etiquette of the Siamese court (Zaini-Lajoubert, 1987: 188). The second embassy, led by Captain Smith, also apparently caused anger in the Siamese court when Smith killed the horse that he had brought from Bengal. The situation enraged the Siamese king and the embassy wasa doubly unfortunate for Captain Smith, who having come to Siam to obtain exclusive goods, had to leave without many of the goods that he had traded.

There are currently two known manuscripts of this text. The first, written in Jawi, is entitled *Hikayat raja-raja Siam*. It is held at the RUL (MS. Cod. Or. 2011). The second manuscript contains the work known as the *Cerita Siam*, written in Rumi script. It is held at the KITLV (MS. Cod. Or. 75). In this work Al-Misiri narrates various episodes in the history of Siam. Zaini-Lajoubert has produced a full transcription of the text, together with a detailed introduction, in her study of the works of Al-Misiri (Zaini-Lajoubert, 1987).

Hikayat Mareskalek

The earliest known version of *Hikayat Mareskalek* (the 'Tale of Mareskalek' [i.e. Daendels]) was written by Syeikh Abdullah bin Muhammad Abu Bakar bin Syeikh Ibrahim al-Misri, in 1827. Al-Misri also wrote *Cerita Siam*, discussed above.

While in a second, later version of this text (HMIb), no mention is made of the British, in the earlier text, (HMIa), the events of the British attack on Java of 1811 are narrated, though somewhat swiftly[24]. The events are told very much from the Dutch perspective, and indeed no actual names of British men are given. In this respect the text forms an interesting contrast with *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*. Perhaps the most interesting detail given concerning the British period is the description of the economic changes brought about under the British:

> **Maka duduklah Inggris memerintah jagat tanah Jawa dan sawah dan tanah kampung sekalian menilik manusia itu. Disuruhnya yang punya tanah itu beli dijual kepada orang lain yang berkehendak akan tanah itu dan segala orang yang menaroh budak disuruhnya merdehekakan budak itu. Maka diperintahnya tanah Jawa itu barang yang dikehendakinya. Beberapa banyak**

[24] See: Zaini Lajoubert, 1987: 108-109.

> **manusia pada waktu itu miskin papa. Hasil daripada orang bersawah dan berkampung, kebun dan rumah terlalu berat cukainya. Maka berkata segala orang Jawa: 'Maka sesungguhnya kami meminta doa kepada Allah supaya segera Inggris mengambil tanah Jawa kalau-kalau ada mudah senang sedikit daripada Kompeni Wolanda, maka ini terlebih keras perintah Inggris daripada Wolanda.'** (Zaini-Lajoubert, 1987: 109)
>
> Then the British came and ruled over the world of Java, and the rice, and the villages and all the possessions of the people. They ordered that those who owned land should trade it with those who wanted to buy the land, and everyone who kept slaves should free those slaves. And they ruled Java in the way that they liked. Many people at that time became impoverished. What rice farmers and villagers produced, as well as their gardens and homes, were taxed very heavily. All the Javanese said; 'Truly we prayed to Allah in hope that when the British took Java they would be more generous and kinder than the Dutch Company, but this British rule is much harsher than that of the Dutch.'

There are three manuscripts containing works known as *Hikayat Mareskalek*, all of which are held at the RUL. Zaini-Lajoubert (1987: 16-19) has discussed at some length the similarities between two of the texts, which she calls *Hikayat Mareskalek* Ia(HMIa) (MS. Cod. Or. 1724) and *Hikayat Mareskalek* Ib (HMIb) (MS. Cod. Or. 2276). She suggests that the second text is probably a copy of the first text. HMIa was written in 1827, and HMIb in 1831 or 1832. The third manuscript, which Zaini-Lajoubert calls HMII (MS. Cod. Or. 6057) was written in 1885, and while showing many similarities with the earlier work, no longer has Mareskalek (the Dutch governor-general of the Indies, Daendels) as the obvious hero. An introduction to the texts in Indonesian and French together with editions of HMIa and HMII has been published by Zaini-Lajoubert (1987).

Hikayat Palembang

There are various recensions of *Hikayat Palembang* (the 'Tale of Palembang'), which vary somewhat in length and content (Woelders, 1975; 29-66). In general, however, this *hikayat* contains the history of Palembang from the time of the British conquest (1812) under Raffles[25], when Sultan Badaruddin was forced to flee and his younger brother Sultan Ahmad Najamuddin was put on the throne, up to around 1825, by which time the Dutch had taken firmer control of the region.

[25] The history related in the text classified as UBL 7 by Woelders (MS. Cod. Or. 2276c) commences some time before the British arrival. In this text there is a description of the situation under the Dutch prior to the time of Daendels, and also a fairly elaborate account of the actions of the British in Palembang.

In the text which Woelders calls TR1 we have mention of *Mista Saman* (Captain Francis Salmond), who also receives mention in *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau*. Raffles put Salmond in charge of the expedition to cross Sumatra from Bengkulu to Palembang, though the mission itself ended in failure, Salmond being taken prisoner by the Dutch.

Perhaps the most interesting of the recensions for the purpose of this study is UBL7. In this recension, the arrival of the British in Batavia is recounted, together with various diplomatic activities undertaken between Sultan Badaruddin and the British. Also there are accounts of the fighting that took place as a result of the first expedition led by Gillespie, and also the later expedition coming from Bengkulu led by Meares. In addition to Salmond, other British men mentioned in the various recensions include *Jenderal Galispi* (Major-General Robert Rollo Gillespie), the *Jenderal Menggala* (governor-general of Bengal), *Jenderal Misti Raplis* (Lieutenant-Governor Raffles), *Kapten Aliat* (Captain Elliot, son of Lord Minto), *Mejer Mir* (Major R. Meares) and *Mejir Rabsun* (Major W. Robison), *Misti Leher* (Alexander Hare), *Misti Pilim* (Richard Phillips).

Woelders describes more than forty manuscripts containing versions of *Hikayat Palembang* (Woelders, 1975: 28-66). Annotated transcriptions of three recensions (MSS. Cod. Or. 2276c and Cod. Or. 2276d, held at the RUL; and Ijzeren kast 112.3 held at the Tropical Institute, Amsterdam), together with translations into Dutch, are included in Woelders' work, *Het sultanaat Palembang* (1975).

Cerita Bangka

There are a number of manuscripts which tell the history of the island of Bangka. *Cerita Bangka,* or *Surat cerita asal tanah dan orang yang mendiami Bangka* (the 'Story of the origins of the land and of the people who live on Bangka'). This anonymous prose text was probably written in 1830 (Van der Linden, 1937: 181) and tells the history of the island of Bangka, as it came under the suzerainty of Majapahit, Johor, Bantam and Palembang. The text bears certain similarities, in terms of scope, with *Hikayat Palembang* described above.

Bangka became involved in the problems of Palembang in the early nineteenth century when both the British and Dutch tried to pacify and influence the Palembang sultanate. Local troops fled to Bangka, thus the British and Dutch became involved in the affairs of Bangka as well, and so entered the narrative of this text. In particular there is mention in the text of *Mayur Mir* (Major Meares) and *Mayur Kut* (Major Court).

There are four manuscripts with variant recensions of this text all held in Leiden (MSS. Or. 68, Or 67, H1198 are held at the KITLV, and MS. Cod. Or. 2285 is held at the RUL). Woelders has described these manuscripts in his survey of manuscripts concerning the history of Palembang (Woelders, 1975: 28-66). Van der Linden has discussed the RUL manuscript and its contents (1937: 180-1). Wieringa has published an edition of *Cerita Bangka* together with a detailed introduction (1990).

Tuhfat al-nafis

Tuhfat al-nafis (the 'Precious gift') was written by Raja Ali Haji in 1890. The author was an important figure in the administration of Riau, but is best remembered for his scholarship, and *Tuhfat al-nafis* is perhaps his most important work.

This history begins towards the end of the seventeenth century and concludes with events of the late 1880's, when the work was completed. The more recent events recorded in the account are drawn from the author's personal experiences and knowledge, and also the experiences of his father, Raja Ahmad. However, for the earlier part of the text, Raja Ali Haji made use of various sources, principally manuscripts in court libraries or in private collections, supplemented by the stories and anecdotes of individuals who are often named in the text (Matheson and Watson Andaya, 1982: 6).

As stated in his introduction to *Tuhfat al-nafis*, Raja Ali Haji's aim was to record the relationship between the Malays and the Bugis, and how that had affected the history of the region during the previous two hundred years. However, the impact

of the Europeans, and towards the end of the period the British in particular, increasingly affected the Malay courts and this is reflected by the fact that the word *Inggeris* (Britain or British) is mentioned over fifty times in the text. Of particular interest in this text is the account of the settlement of Singapore by the British, and the installation of Tengku Long as sultan. Key British individuals mentioned in *Tuhfat al-nafis* include Raffles, Major William Farquhar (also referred to in the text as *Raja Melaka*), Captain Robert Geddes, Captain James Glass and Governor Bonham. Often however, the British are referred to generally, without specific individuals being named.

Various copies of *Tuhfat al-nafis* exist in manuscript form[26]. In addition to these manuscripts, an edition of the work, complete with detailed introduction, has been published by Matheson Hooker (1991, 1998). A translation of the text has been published by Matheson and Watson Andaya[27] (1982). Other works of note discussing Raja Ali Haji and *Tuhfat al-nafis* include Maxwell (1890a), Winstedt (1932), Mohd. Taib Osman (1976) and Kratz (1999).

Hikayat Pahang

Hikayat Pahang (the 'Tale of Pahang') is an anonymous work recording the history of the state of Pahang between the years 1832 and 1932, that is, under the rule of Bendahara Ali, Bendahara Tun Mutahir and Bendahara Tun Ahmad, who became Sultan Ahmad al-Muazzam Syah. While in the first half of this text the British are hardly mentioned, in the second half of the work, there are numerous references to British individuals and institutions, reflecting the increasing involvement of the British in the affairs of the various Malay states as the twentieth century approached.

The British individuals mentioned include Hugh Clifford, Maxwell, Frank Swettenham, J.P. Rodger (British resident in Pahang), Governor Weld, Mr Davidson (resident), Andrew Clarke (governor). Discussions between the British and the state officials of Pahang are reported fully throughout this text, with many details relating

[26] For details of the various manuscripts see Matheson Hooker (1991: 91-107).

[27] The current author's translations of quotes from this text have often drawn on Matheson and Watson Andaya (1982).

to various companies and individuals. British officials are always accorded their correct British title. This work is also particularly notable for the use of English words and terms. As well as terms such as *government* and *magistrate* being used plentifully throughout the second half of the text, other English words such as *room*, *guard* and *office* are also used. This text is also remarkable for the use of the word *British* as well as *Inggeris* to describe the British.

There are two manuscripts of this work known to exist. The longest version is found in MS. 937 which is held at the PUM and is the manuscript that was the basis for the edition published by Kalthum Jeran (1986). This manuscript dates from the mid-1930's. The second manuscript, held at the Arkib Negara, Malaysia, is much shorter, for the narrative ends with the events of the year 1883. It seems that this is the manuscript that was once owned by Winstedt, (Kalthum Jeran, 1986: v) and is the version referred to by Linehan (1936) in his study on the history of Pahang, for which he makes extensive use of *Hikayat Pahang*.

Outside the Malay world

Hikayat Istambul

This *hikayat* relates events of the Crimean war (1853-56), principally fought between the Russians and Turks, but also involving other European powers including the British. The sections that mention the British have been summarised by Braginsky thus:

> In Russia rules the raja of Moscow, assisted by two barons. He decides to take the field against Turkey. The kings of France, England, Austria, Brabant and Holland also set off for Turkey, but having discussed whether it is expedient to support Russia, they come to the conclusion that they had better return to their countries. Nevertheless they charge the king of England with defending the interests of the Christians in Jerusalem. The king sends his friars to Jerusalem and thus enrages Russian monks who leave the city. ...
>
> The Turks capture a great number of Russian lands ... the king of France discusses the situation with the sultan, the latter putting all the blame on the Russians. England and France side with the Turks, all provincial pashas come to the sultan's rescue. Through Anatolia the Turks reach Dagestan and then invade the Crimea, being victorious on land and sea. Unable to commit themselves to either side the Dutch eventually join forces with the Russians, but suffer defeat by the British fleet. (Braginsky and Diakonova, 1999: 410-1)

Two manuscripts of this work are known to exist, in Leiden (RUL Ms. CB 137) and in Jakarta (PNRI, MI 699). The work has been discussed by Van Ronkel (1909: 288-9), and in Braginsky and Diakonova (1999: 410-1).

Hikayat peperangan Al-Maulana Sultan Istanbul

This *hikayat*, which relates certain events that occurred in the earlier stages of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, was probably written in late 1877 (Braginsky, 1996: 194)[28]. The anonymous author of the text claims to have made use of sources that include Egyptian, Persian, Indian and English newspapers and also the oral stories of a Turkish man, Ahmad Effendi, who visited Penang in 1877. It seems that its author saw this work as simply being a first part, as it is stated that the narrative will continue in a second volume. Thus, the *hikayat* is concerned with the events that preceded the outbreak of war, together with events from the earlier stages of the war, when the Turkish forces had the upper hand over the Russians in the Caucasus. However of particular interest for this thesis is one part of the narrative involving two magical crystals, one red and one green. The red crystal is able to absorb the light of the sun, and then produce a flash that the Turkish forces use to blind their Russian attackers. A British doctor who loses one eye as a result of the crystal's powers reports the events to his king back in London, who promptly dispatches four physicians to travel to Istanbul to investigate. The British experts are unable to explain the power of the crystal; indeed the flash produced kills one of the four British experts. The doctors travel back to London to tell their king that the crystal has unearthly powers, which nothing can resist. The power of the crystal is presented as being a manifestation of the omnipotence of Allah. The author presents the war as one between the faithful and the non-believers, and this incident concerning the magic crystal and the British experts must also be seen in this light.

The only known manuscript of this work is held at the CUL (MS. Add. 3763). The colophon of the manuscript records that a scribe, named Muhammad Samman ibn

[28] This work should not be confused with the *Hikayat perang Sultan Setambul*. A lithograph was apparently published in Singapore. The text has received little scholarly attention, but is reported by Braginsky and Diakonova to be 'allegedly based on newspaper reports' (1999: 410). Unfortunately it has not been possible to locate this text for the purposes of this study and it is conceivable that there may be mention of the British in it.

Haji Muhammad Amin of Balik Pulau (Braginsky, 1996: 193), finished the copying of the work on 17 September 1896. Braginsky has discussed this work at some length (1996 & 1999).

Hikayat Queen Victoria

This work, by Kapitan Haji Muhammad Said bin Haji Sulaiman, was published in two volumes; volume 1, in 1904 and volume 2, in 1905. The work relates the history of the life of Queen Victoria in chronological order. It seems that the text is a translation or reworking of an English language text, though the original source remains unknown. The work was published by Kelly and Walsh of Singapore and is referred to by Zaaba (1939:150). Proudfoot includes the work in his catalogue (1993: 539) but apparently was unable to locate any copies of the text. However the present author has located copies of both volumes at the PPZ.

The British in topical texts

The nineteenth century saw the growth of the genre of topical texts in Malay literature. Such texts tend to focus on particular incidents, normally contemporary, which were for some reason remarkable or extraordinary. For example there are texts describing fires and floods, or the explosion of the volcano Krakatoa. These texts are undoubtedly rooted in historical reality, and owe much to the rise of journalism, with its use of realism. In this thesis however[29], these texts will be considered as a group separate from the historical texts, for generally they do not tend to deal with issues of political history, whether wars or the legitimacy of rulers, but rather with natural calamities or other events not directly related to the political power.

[29] The text *Cerita Nyai Dasima* has not been included in this study, though it does include a British man in the narrative. This text is part of a distinct genre of *syair*, predominantly from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, which tell of the relationships between native women (*Nyai*) and European men. For more information on this text see Aveling (1988), Toer (1982), Rahmat Ali (2000).

Two of the texts described below, those by Tuan Simi[30], are somewhat atypical of Malay literature. They are commentaries on the changing situation of 1830's Singapore, and the hardships the Malays suffer as a result. While British individuals are not named in these texts, Britain, with its seat of power in Bengal, is clearly blamed by the author for many of the social ills described in his *syair*. Much more typical of the genre of topical texts is *Syair Kampong Gelam terbakar,* by Abdullah, which recounts the events of a fire in Singapore in 1847.

Syair dagang berjual beli

This *syair* (the 'Poem of the merchant engaged in trade') of 56 stanzas was written in Singapore, by Tuan Simi, in the 1830's. The *syair* tells of the problems faced by Malay merchants in their dealings with Chinese and Indian traders. The old rules have changed, and promises have become meaningless. At the top of the new order are the British merchants, who are also the lawmakers and police. Despite the alleged justness of the British rulers, they inevitably support the Chinese and Indian traders, in order to maintain profit. The reputation for justice and fairness is all pretence (Muhammad Haji Salleh, 1994: 46).

While no British individual is named in this text, reference is made to the law of the Company (*perintahnya kompeni*). Trading disputes are brought to a British merchant (*saudagar Inggeris*), and the important men in the city all come from Britain (*dari negeri Englan*). While the main anger is perhaps aimed at the purported dishonesty of Chinese and Indian traders, it is the hypocritical tolerance of such deeds by the British that is at the heart of the author's criticism.

Two copies of the text are known to exist in manuscript form and they are both held at the Bibliotheque National, Paris. Mal.-Pol. 96 is a copy of Mal.-Pol.91. A facsimile of the manuscript, together with a transcription of the *syair* and an introduction to the text are published by Muhammad Haji Salleh (1994).

[30] Muhammad Haji Salleh has romanised the name as Simi (1994: 39 & 49) whereas Proudfoot (<MCP> <http://online.anu.edu.au/asianstudies/ahcen/proudfoot/MCP/DBB_bib.html> 03 February 2002) has romanised the author's name as Siami.

Syair potong gaji

This *syair* (the 'Poem of cuts in wages') of 38 stanzas was, like the *Syair dagang berjual beli* above, written by Tuan Simi in Singapore in the 1830's. This poem focuses on the lot of ordinary workers in Singapore under British rule. The *syair* opens by setting the troublesome and difficult story firmly in the realm of the British governor-general. It is the rule of His Majesty from Bengal (*Yang Dipertuan Besar Negeri Benggala*) that causes the hardship suffered by the workers in Singapore. As in *Syair dagang berjual beli,* no British individuals are named, but clearly all the sufferings of the workers, who are subjected to cuts in wages while their work-load is increased (*Gaji pun dipotong kerja-kerja ditambah*), can be blamed on the British colonial administration.

As with *Syair dagang berjual beli,* two copies of the text are known to exist in manuscript form and they are both held at the Bibliotheque National, Paris. Mal.-Pol. 96 is a copy of Mal.-Pol.91. A facsimile of the manuscript, together with a transcription of the *syair* and an introduction to the text, are published by Muhammad Haji Salleh (1994).

Syair Kampong Gelam terbakar

Syair Kampong Gelam terbakar (the 'Poem of the fire in Kampong Gelam') was written by Abdullah in March 1847. This poem of 132 stanzas reports the events in Singapore of 12 February 1847, when a large fire destroyed much of Kampong Gelam and neighbouring areas. Abdullah was a witness to the fire, and records the events as he saw them and reports the assistance he gave to those attempting to control the fire.

A large number of British and other European individuals are mentioned by name in the *syair*. These mentions generally occur in connection with the praiseworthy efforts of various individuals in either battling against the fire directly, or in directing the efforts of others[31]. Abdullah records the names of various Britons, including the missionary Keasberry and Dunman, founder of Singapore's modern

[31] A complete list of names included in the *syair* is in Skinner (1973: 54).

police force. Most praise is directed at the governor, who is unnamed in the text, but was in fact William Butterworth (Skinner, 1973 36).

There are no extant copies of the early lithograph editions of this *syair*, though three manuscripts of the poem exist; Co. 270 W, in the Muzium Negara, Jakarta (copied in 1860); Co. Kl. 182 (copied by Klinkert in 1880) and Co. Or. 3346 (date of copying unknown) held at the RUL. Skinner has published an annotated edition of the text based on Co. Kl. 182 together with a very complete introduction and synopsis (Skinner, 1973). As Skinner notes, it is important to differentiate between the two *syair* written on fires by Abdullah. *Syair Kampong Gelam terbakar* concerns a fire in 1847, while *Syair Singapura terbakar* concerns a fire in 1830. It seems that there is no poem named *Syair Singapura dimakan api*, though various critics have attributed such a poem to Abdullah (Skinner, 1973; 27).

The British in official (jubilee and celebration) works

This group of texts that I have loosely categorised under the heading 'official', comprises a number of works, mostly linked with jubilee celebrations marking the reigns of the British monarchs Queen Victoria and King George V[32].

Some of the poems can be seen as panegyrics to the British monarch, praising the qualities of the ruler. Others are records of the celebrations held in the Malay world to commemorate the jubilees, whether in Penang, Melaka or Singapore. However, in addition to serving as straightforward records of events, it can be argued that the particular nature of the descriptions also serve to glorify the position and legitimacy of the monarchy. In *Shaer Intan Jubilee* for example the descriptions of the bustling ports, benefiting from all the latest technologies, and the happiness and peace in which the various races live together, creates something of an image of an ideal Malay realm:

[32] The *Syair Prince of Wales* (DBP, MS. 158) has not been analysed for the purposes of this study. The manuscript written on an exercise book in 1923 is in a bad condition. It appears that it was originally in two parts. According to a note attached to the front cover of the manuscript, when the manuscript was borrowed by the sultan of Brunei, the complete manuscript was not subsequently returned. Due to the poor condition of the manuscript and the length of the text, I have not yet attempted an initial reading.

Dahulu Singapura negeri kechil	Previously Singapore was a small city
Apa di-buat segala miskil	Whatever you tried to do, everything was difficult
Skarang Singapura bertambah hasil	Now Singapore is more prosperous
Orang pun banyak hukum pun adil[33].	It is populous, with just law.

(de Vries, 1897: 28)

This section includes two works written by Europeans. The earliest of them is the *Carmen Malaicum* to commemorate the death of Queen Mary (1662-1694), written in Oxford in 1695 by Thomas Hyde, and, as Gallop (1997: 74) has argued, is very much a curiosity. Then from the nineteenth century there is the *Shaer Intan Jubili* by De Vries. While perhaps not the most important works of nineteenth century Malay literature, the language used by the European writers is of particular comparative value for our assessment of change and development in the language terms used to describe the ruler and state. The text evokes a sensation of a much closer proximity to the metropole than seen in earlier Malay texts.

It is interesting to note that in his study on the Malay community in Sri Lanka, Hussainmiya records the existence of a poem entitled '*A commemorative syair on the Golden Jubilee of the accession to the throne of Queen Victoria, 1887*'[34]. Hussainmiya describes this as 'a short poem of praise, composed by Ince Yusuf Jailani'. Apparently the poem is dedicated to Sir Arthur H. Gordon, the governor of Ceylon at the time that the Golden Jubilee celebrations were held (Hussainmiya, 1990; 141)[35]. The existence of this Sri Lankan poem poses an important question concerning the stimulus behind the writing of these jubilee texts. From Hussainmiya's very brief description, the Sri Lankan poem would seem to bear a resemblance to the anonymous poem on Queen Victoria's Jubilee (SOAS MS 46944) described below.

[33] In quoting excerpts from this text, I have used the same spelling and punctuation as was used in the original text, published in *Rumi* script.

[34] Hussainmiya does not indicate if this is the original title of the poem or a translation. However, for all the other works he lists in the chapter on Malay literary activities in Sri Lanka, he gives a title in Malay, so I presume he is quoting the original title under which the poem was published. See Hussainmiya: 1990; 134-151.

[35] Unfortunately Hussainmiya does not state where this poem was published, though he seems to suggest that it was published in a newspaper by the name of *Alamat Langkapuri*. I have not as yet been able to find out if and where copies of this poem still exist.

Carmen Malaicum

Thomas Hyde's poem of eight lines was written for inclusion in a commemorative volume, *Pietas Universitatis Oxoniensis in obitum Augustissimae & Desideratiissimae Reginae Maria,* published by Oxford University in 1695. A facsimile of the poem, together with a romanised transliteration and English translation have been published by Gallop (1997), together with a discussion of the author's background and some observations on the author's use of Jawi. As Gallop states, the poem is notable for being the earliest known literary composition in Malay by a British person, and also for the fact that it represents the earliest instance of the printing of Malay in Arabic type in Britain (Gallop, 1997: 76). The text is held at the BL (112.f.6, f.F2v).

Syair dan ucapan Kuin 50 Tahun Jubili

The cover page of this 16 page publication announces the contents as *Syair dan ucapan Kuin 50 Tahun Jubili,* ('Poem and speeches for the Queen's 50th Jubilee') with the subtitle *sambutan daripada isi negeri Melaka pada 27 dan 28 Jun 1887* ('reactions from the people of Melaka on 27 and 28 June 1887'). This work, by Munsyi Muhammad Jaafar b. Abdul Karim of Melaka (1891) can be divided into three parts. Firstly, there is the *syair* celebrating the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria, written in 1887. Secondly, there are the speeches given in Melaka on the occasion of the jubilee celebrations. Thirdly, the last two pages of the work are given over to a *Syair penambahan* ('Additional poem'), which was actually composed in 1891 for the purpose of the publication. The three texts were published as a lithograph in 1891. Copies are held at the PPZ, and the PNRI. An edition of *Syair Kuin 50 Tahun Jubili* has been published by Murtagh (2003).

Anonymous poem on Queen Victoria's Jubilee

This short *syair* of 20 stanzas, laudatory in style, is solely concerned with describing the virtues of Queen Victoria on the occasion of her fiftieth year on the throne. No mention is made in this panegyric of authorship or the date of composition. It is likely however that the poem was composed in the year of the

Golden Jubilee, 1887. There is little in this poem which is peculiarly Malay, or relevant to the celebration of the jubilee in the Straits Settlements. Perhaps the only hint of local colour we get in the poem is when the reign is described as having reached the length of fifty rice harvests. The manuscript (SOAS 46944) of this *syair* is bound together with several other poems which seem to have been collected by Maxwell (Ricklefs and Voorhoeve, 1977: 166). Murtagh (2003) has published an edition of this text.

Perak jubilee addresses

Two short *syair* from Perak written on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee were published in the Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society (no. 17, 1886, pp. 366-375). Together with speeches that were given to mark the occasion the poems are included under the headings *Jubilee Address by Perak ra'iyats,* and *Jubilee Address by Perak penghulus, June* 1887. The poems are somewhat eulogistic in their praise of Queen Victoria, but also shower praise on the British officials in Singapore and in Perak. For brief comments and partial transcriptions of these poems see Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1994: 44-46).

Shaer Intan Jubilee

Shaer Intan Jubilee (the 'Poem of the Diamond Jubilee'), 358 verses in length, was published in 1897 by Singapore Press of Coleman Street, Singapore. The poem was written by a European official working in Singapore, Tuan H.A. de Vries. The opening of this Malay *syair* states that the poem was composed so that the people of Singapore would not forget the events of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. The opening verses praise the qualities of the British queen on the occasion of her sixty years on the throne:

Baginda ratu permaisuri	Her Majesty the queen
Satu QUEEN Rajah yang bahri	One QUEEN, the fair monarch
Arip budiman bijak bestari	Knowing and wise, capable and accomplished
Sangat adil memrintah negri.	Ruling over the country in a very just way.

(de Vries, 1897: 2)

However, by far the larger part of the work is given over to an account of the way in which the anniversary was celebrated in Singapore. We are told of a committee that was set up to plan and organise the festivities (de Vries, 1897: 3). The various celebrations are described at some length, and in general the poem presents a picture of a multiracial, peaceful and prosperous centre of trade, celebrating the advantages that have been brought to the city under the rule of the British monarch.

In addition to general references to white men and ladies (*orang putie dan mam)* a considerable number of Europeans are individually mentioned in the work: *Tuan Egerton, Tuan Anderson, Tuan Stringer, Tuan Joaquim, Tuan Meyer, Colonial Secretary Tuan Kynnersley, Lady Mitchel* and *Tuan Eleam.* According to its front cover the poem was published both in Rumi and Jawi versions[36]. A copy of the edition in Rumi script is held at the BL (14626.a.10).

Syair King George yang kelima

Syair King George yang kelima (the 'Poem of King George V'), a poem of 123 stanzas, is held at the National Library of Singapore (SEA 899.11 MUH). The full title of the work on the front page of the booklet is *Syair King George yang kelima memakai mahkota di Negeri Ingglan pada 22 June 1911.* The booklet is 15 pages in length, written in typeset Jawi and bears the English language subtitle, '*A Malay coronation poetry by Mohamed Ariffin, Munshi,'* on the front cover page. The poem was written by Munsyi Muhammad Ariffin bin Haji Muhammad Lebai. It was published by its author and printed by Matbaah al-Iman, Robinson Road, Singapore.

Despite the name of the poem, the British monarch actually receives very little attention in this text. The most notable mentions are the reports of speeches in the king's name at the cricket club. There is also fleeting mention of his attributes and a record of his wife's name (*Kuin Mary nama permaisurinya* / Queen Mary is the name of his consort). The main part of the poem is actually concerned with describing the various festivities and celebrations, including boat races and firework displays held in Penang between 20 and 26 June 1911.

[36] On the front cover of the Rumi version is written '*Ini shaer di-chap dua macham jaitu satu dengan huruf Melayu dan satu huruf orang Putih'.*

Hikayat perihal keramaian... Silber Jubili King George ke-5

This *Hikayat perihal keramaian... Silber Jubili King George ke-5* (the 'Tale of the celebrations of the Silver Jubilee of King George V') was published in Penang by United Prints in 1935. It was written by Haji Syamsuddin bin Mahmud Yunus. The *hikayat* is perhaps more akin to a commemorative album. This publication comprises descriptions of the various events held to celebrate the Silver Jubilee of King George V in Penang together with illustrative black and white photographs.

The book of 106 pages includes 36 black and white photographs. The Malay text is written in Jawi script and includes a full list of contents. A copy of this work is held at the BL.

Conclusion

This overview of Malay texts mentioning the British demonstrates the diversity of works in which the Malay author included British individuals and their institutions. While some of the works described joined an established corpus of chronicles, genealogies, poems of war, and panegyrics, other works were more innovative and indeed represented new genres in Malay literature, the biography, autobiography, travelogue and diary being the most notable. The texts allow us to define major topics discussed by Malay authors in relation to their encounter with the British. The first of these topics was the broadening image of the world and the place of Britain in it. While in texts such as *Misa Melayu* and *Syair Mukomuko*, the British are described as appearing and disappearing without any mention of India, let alone Britain, in *Hikayat Abdullah* and certain jubilee texts we see an awareness of the British Empire and the British metropole, which point to significant transformations in the imagination of the world. This topic will be discussed in Chapter Three.

The second topic for discussion is justice, a theme which is central to numerous traditional Malay texts, and which continues to feature strongly in those texts representing the British. In a whole range of texts ranging from *Syair perang*

Inggris di Betawi, *Hikayat Abdullah* and *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* through to texts such as *Hikayat Pahang*, *Syair Tuan Hampris* and the jubilee texts, we see specific mention and deliberation on justice under the British. While in certain texts, British justice is described in accordance with traditional Malay ideals, in other texts British justice is perceived differently, and comparisons are made with past experiences under the Malays, the Portuguese and the Dutch. This topic will be discussed in Chapter Four.

The third topic for discussion will be the engagement with British ideas of education and technology. Of all the Malay authors Abdullah's interest in technological innovation is the most pronounced. He shows particular interest in the printing press, but also a wide variety of other new technologies such as the steam ships sailing to Singapore. His son Ibrahim Munsyi, shared this interest and wrote of the gaslights illuminating the streets of Singapore. But throughout the body of texts described in this overview, there are mentions here and there of technologies linked to the British. These details are often not necessary to the narrative or plot, but highlight the interest and curiosity that was sparked in the Malay writer. New ways of understanding the world were also introduced by the British through education. This too was a favourite theme of Abdullah, but various other authors commented on different aspects of the education of British individuals and the new approaches to teaching that were brought to the Malay world. This topic will be discussed in Chapter Five.

The final topic to be considered in this thesis is the Malay portrayal of the British individual. In traditional Malay literature very little detail tends to be given regarding the psychology of individuals, and even early Malay and Indonesian novels have been noted for their lack of realistic characterisation and a tendency to use stock traits and descriptions. Nonetheless, there are sufficent observations and details given to build up a picture of how the British character generally was understood, and also how some of the recurring individuals of these texts such as Raffles, Minto, Queen Victoria and Keasberry were viewed. This topic will be discussed in Chapter Six.

The analysis in Chapters Three and Four will be arranged according to a chronological structure. However, Chapters Five and Six will be arranged thematically. This lack of chronology in the later chapters should not be seen as arising from inconsistency on the part of the author. Pertinent reasons for the different approach taken to each topic will become clear on reading each chapter.

CHAPTER THREE

THE CHANGING IMAGE OF BRITAIN IN TRADITIONAL MALAY LITERATURE

From the time of the earliest British voyages to Southeast Asia, diaries and other records were kept by early European travellers, be they traders, pirates or explorers, detailing their impressions. With the onset of the period of British colonial expansion such accounts were kept and published by a whole range of officials and adventurers. These written witnesses give the modern scholar a tremendous opportunity to consider this British encounter with the land, nature and peoples of the Malay world. But just as this encounter with a new foreign 'other' affected the European understanding of the world, so too that encounter had an impact in the reverse direction. This chapter will address how the arrival of the British in the Malay world affected the Malay idea of the world, discussing how the Malay notion of the world, as reflected in its literature, changed over a period of time that saw increasing contact with the British.

The crucial theme underpinning this thesis is the Malay understanding of the 'other'. When considering the 'other', as has been discussed in Chapter One, a complex array of characteristics and questions might be considered. This chapter seeks to look at one aspect of this 'other', that of the 'other's geographical origins. The Malay encounter with the British took place primarily within the Malay world. It was only in the nineteenth century that Malays began to write about journeys, initially to 'British Asia' and, by the later nineteenth century, to the British metropole itself. The question arises as to how Malay writers explained the geographical origin of the Britons that they included in their narratives, and how they incorporated knowledge of these newcomers into their existing understanding of the world. The aim of this

chapter is to assess how the Malay notion of the exact geographical location of Britain developed, as revealed in their literature. The first part of this chapter will seek to understand the map of the world as imagined by Malay writers on the dawn of European activity in the area, and following on from this, the second part of the chapter will examine how the notion of Britain develops and is clarified, from the first mentions of the British in the early seventeenth century, through to the texts of the early twentieth century.

Malay knowledge of the world as revealed in external sources

We know from a wide variety of sources that a multitude of different peoples had been visiting Southeast Asia, and particularly the Malay world, for centuries prior to the arrival of Europeans in the sixteenth century[1]. These visitors came mainly for trade. Reid (1999: 159) remarks that the Europeans who first arrived in Southeast Asia were often astonished by the fabulous wealth, and the mysterious herbs and poisons, they found there. Conversely the inhabitants of the region, already being used to a tremendous diversity of people coming to their ports, were not at all astonished at the arrival of Europeans, who represented just another aspect of that diversity. From Reid's comprehensive description of trading patterns in Southeast Asia, principally in the period 1400-1680, a picture develops of a complex trade system, partly contained within the region, but also with Southeast Asian ports acting as entrepôts for a more far-reaching and extensive Asian trading network (Reid, 1993). In addition to the mainland hubs, cities in the Indonesia-Malay world such as Melaka, Patani, Brunei, Pasai, Aceh, Banten, Jepara, Gresik and Makassar served as centres of commerce through which inter- and intra-regional trade flowed. The two main markets for Southeast Asian goods beyond the region were China and India, and certainly before the Europeans ever arrived, ports throughout the archipelago were well accustomed to receiving traders from those lands. For example, Reid notes that Melaka, Pasai, Brunei, Gresik and Demak all owed some part of their prosperity to

[1] There had of course been various European travellers who reached Southeast Asia before the Portuguese arrival of 1509. For example, Nicolo Conti reached the region in the 1430's and Hieronomo di Santo Stefano was in Sumatra in the late fifteenth century (Major, R.H.,1857). On the locations that Marco Polo claimed to have visited in Southeast Asia see Jack-Hinton (1964).

being used as Chinese trading bases in the early fifteenth century (1993: 12). Malays also visited China; Melaka was the most frequent source of tribute missions to China in the fifteenth century, and in addition to missions from Brunei, Pasai and Pahang there were also numerous missions from Java (Reid, 1993: 16). From Western Asia we know that there were frequent visitors to the Malay world and that many of these visitors had formed at least semi-permanent communities in the main trading cities. According to Tomé Pires, when Sequeira arrived in Melaka in 1509, there were 1,000 Gujerati merchants, and 4,000 Persians, Bengalis and Arabs, together with a sizeable number of Tamils (Pires, 1944: 254-5). In the description of the *syahbandar*[2] system, we are given further evidence of the diversity of the communities present in Melaka:

> There is a *xabandar* for the Gujeratees, the most important of all; there is a *xabandar* for the Bunuaquilim, Bengalees, Pegus, Pase; there is a *xabandar* for the Javanese, Molucans, Banda, Palembang, Tanjompura and Luções; there is a *xabandar* for the Chinese, Lequeos, Chancheo and Champa. (Pires, 1944: 265)

The sea routes by which traders came to the Malay world and also by which Malays travelled both to India and to China are well discussed. So too it should be remembered that from the period of Islamisation onwards, Malays began to travel to Arabia for religious reasons and the Acehnese even sent a mission as far as Istanbul in 1564 (Iskandar, 1970: 44). Also important, but perhaps less well documented, were the overland routes. From the little extant evidence, we might conjecture that for some time Malays had been making journeys inland into mainland Southeast Asia. Reid cites the example of the Malay trader who was met by two Dutch factors in Vientiane in 1642 (Reid, 1993: 53). There was clearly a great deal of knowledge of the world available to some Southeast Asians as a result of these encounters. That such outside knowledge was incorporated, at least selectively, is exemplified by the evidence contained in Albuquerque's letter to Manuel I[3], where he writes of a map with place names written in Javanese, which he had obtained from a Javanese pilot[4]:

> A large map of a Javanese pilot, containing the Cape of Good Hope, Portugal and the land of Brazil, the Red Sea and the Sea of Persia, the Clove Islands, the navigation of the Chinese and the Gores [Ruyukkans, BM] ... and the hinterland and how the kingdoms

[2] For a description of the *syahbandar* system, and the cosmopolitansim of Melaka see Thomaz (1993: 77-82).

[3] Manuel I, Portuguese ruler 1495-1521.

[4] A full discussion of this map is contained in Cortesão's *Cartografia e cartografos Portugueses dos seculos XV e XVI.* Vol. 2 Lisbon, 1935, pp. 122-30.

border on each other. (Albuquerque to King Manuel, 1512, translated: Cortesão, 1944: lxxviii)

The literary notion of the world prior to the British arrival

The complex picture of interaction described very briefly above, is not fully mirrored in traditional Malay literary texts. This is not to say of course that traditional Malay literature denied or actively rejected the diversity of knowledge brought to Malay shores by trade, but rather to recognise that in general, the main concerns of its authors tended to be elsewhere. As discussed in Chapter One, various scholars (Van der Linden, 1937; Van der Kroef, 1963; Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: Koster, forthcoming a and b) have pointed to the lack of mention of Europeans in traditional Malay literature. However Kratz, has argued that the neglect of Europeans is not necessarily so surprising, suggesting that 'the uniform treatment of the various European nations, all of which were seen, it would appear, by their Malay hosts as one and the same ... appears in no way different from the little interest which the other visiting nations received' (Kratz, 2000: 26). He points out that relations with India and China are 'sparingly recorded', and also that there are few texts which give 'an obvious and historical picture of the state and relations of the Malay sultanates prior to colonial rule'. While recognising Kratz's rightful observation on the sparse nature of Malay literary records concerning visiting nations, it is nonetheless possible to construct something of an understanding of the extent of traditional Malay geographical knowledge of the world by considering a selection of Malay texts which concern events prior to and including the early period of European involvement in the Malay world. For the purposes of this discussion, four texts have been chosen from the most important of the early Malay sultantes, namely *Hikayat Iskandar*, from Pasai, *Sejarah Melayu* from Melaka, *Hikayat Aceh* from Aceh, and *Hikayat Hang Tuah* from Johor.

Before considering the view of the world as mapped out in those four texts, it is worth considering additional knowledge that was potentially available to Malay authors. *Bustanus salatin* (the 'Garden of kings') represents perhaps the best example of outside knowledge that was brought to the Malay world, though much of its

content was never incorporated into Malay literature[5]. The text was written by Nuruddin al-Raniri[6] in 1638, on the request of Sultan Iskandar Thani of Aceh (1636-41). While written in the Malay language, it was a work by a non-Malay, and to a large extent the author drew on Persian and Arabic sources for its compilation.

At the end of the first chapter of *Bustanus salatin,* the seven seas[7] and four great rivers[8] of the world are listed. The other main section of interest, is entitled '*Fasal pada menyatakan segala iklim dan segala yang mendiami dia'* ('Section describing all the regions and everyone who inhabits them'). Citing his source as Qutadah[9], Al-Raniri describes the seven regions[10] which he classes as *iklim*[11]. It is noticeable that this concept of *iklim,* well-established in Arab and Persian traditions, does not seem to have been used in other Malay texts. Geographical locations listed in this section are far more detailed than anything seen in the texts mentioned above,

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[5] In particular, it seems that the first chapter, containing this geographical knowledge, was among the least widespread of the seven chapters making up the complete text (See Jelani, 2003, 83-86).

[6] For details on Nuruddin al-Raniri's life and works see among others: Voorhoeve, 1951; 1955; Drewes, 1955; Iskandar, 1964; Attas, 1986: Braginsky, 1998: 335-339; Jelani, 1999; 2003.

[7] The seas of Tabaristan, Kirman, Aman, Kalzum, Hindustan, Rum, Maghrib.

[8] The rivers Nile, Euphrates, Jaihun (Amu-Darya), Saihun (Syr-Darya).

[9] Qatada ibn Di'amah As-Sadusi al-Khattab (679-736).

[10] 'So were created seven *iklim.* Their lengths stretch from east to west, and their widths from north to south. The first *iklim* is Hindi, it is the longest of all the *iklim,* ten thousand two hundred miles in length, second is the *iklim* of Mekah and Hijaz ... the third *iklim* is the land of Basarah and Bidayah and Kufah ... fourth is the *iklim* of Irak and Syam, and Baitulmuqaddis, and Khurasani and its length is three hundred miles, it is the most moderate of all the *iklim,* and is the place of all the prophets and jurists ... The fifth *iklim* is the land of Rum and Armaniah and Khurwarin as far as Andalas ... The sixth *iklim* is the place of Yakjuj wa Makjuj. The seventh *iklim* is the lands of China and Turki. The people who live in China are in the east part, and the people who live in Talhah are in the west part. The feet of those two peoples meet because of the roundness of the world.' *Maka dijadikan tujuh iklim. Maka panjangnya dari Masyrik datang ke Maghrib, dan lebarnya dari Utara dating ke Selatan. Maka pertama iklim itu benua Hindi, iaitu terpanjang daripada iklim, sepuluh ribu dua ratus mil panjangnya. Kedua iklim benua Mekah dan benua Hijaz...ketiga iklim benua Basarah dan Bidayah dan Kufah ... keempat iklim benua Irak dan benua Syam, dan Baitulmuqaddis, dan benua Khursani, dan panjangnya tiga ratus mil, itulah iklim yang sederhana daripada segala iklim itu, dan tempat jadi sekalian anbia dan segala hukama ... Kelima iklim benua Rum dan negeri Armaniah dan negeri Khuwarin hingga negeri Andalas ... Keenam iklim tempat diam Yakjuj wa Makjuj. Ketujuh iklim benua Cina dan benua Turki. Ada pun orang yang mendiami benua Cina itu pada pihak Masyrik, dan orang yang mendiami benua Talhah pada pihak Maghrib. Tapak kaki kedua mereka itu bertemu kerana berbetulan bulat bumi ini.*

[11] The term *iklim,* an Arabic word originating from the Greek *klima,* meaning 'clime' or 'climate' or perhaps more generally 'region'. According to Islamic tradition, the idea of *iklim* refers to a zone extending, in longitude, from one bound to the other of the inhabited world and falling between two parallels of latitude. Each climate consists of a number of towns, rivers and mountains etc. Miquel notes in the Encyclopaedia of Islam 'there exists another meaning of the word *iklim,* this time originating in Iran. The word *keshwar* refers, in Persian tradition, to the seven great kingdoms of the world, of which six (India, China, the Turks, Rum, Africa and Arabia) are distributed around the

particularly with regard to the Middle and Near East. There is also a description of the roundness of the world in the detail of the seventh *iklim*. These geographical details and lists of place names are expanded further in the second chapter, which tells the history of the world beginning with Adam and Mohammed, and continuing through the histories of the rulers of the main kingdoms such as *Rum, Mesir, Arab, Hijaz, Syam,* and *Hindustan* before telling of the histories of Malay rulers from Melaka, Pahang and Aceh. Thus in *Bustanus salatin*, a picture of the world is created that stretches across the Islamic world, from the Mediterranean world of Spain and Africa across the Middle East and central Asia, to India and China.

In contrast with *Bustanus salatin*, while clearly having its roots firmly in the Middle East, *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, has had great influence on the Malay literary tradition (Brakel, 1979; Winstedt, 1938; Soeratno, 1991). The text was probably first translated into Malay in Pasai at the beginning of the fifteenth century (Brakel, 1979: 18), and is one of the earliest known Malay *hikayat*. The essential aim of the author of *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*[12] is to show how Iskandar became the greatest ruler in the world since Sulaiman. He fights many battles, generally against non-believers, and is accompanied on his travels by Nabi Khidir. In the introduction to the *hikayat* it is announced that the story will be told of Iskandar, who travelled to all corners of the world (*Perinya ia menjalani segala pihak bumi dari masyrik datang ke maghrib;* Van Leeuwen, 1937: 46). Later on in the text, when Iskandar first meets Nabi Khidir, he is told that Allah has chosen him to be ruler of the world, or in other words over East and West (*Masyrik dan Maghrib*), and this theme is repeated on numerous occasions throughout the text. Having been told that Iskandar will rule over and visit all parts of the world, including those parts previously unknown to man (*segala tempat yang tiada pernah dijalaninya oleh manusia;* Van Leeuwen, 1937: 127), we can extract from the story of Iskandar's travels and conquests an idea of what was considered to be the geographical extent of the world. This was of course a

central kingdom, that of Iran. An obvious borrowing of this idea, but using the word *iklim* appears in al-Masudi'. (1971: vol.3, 1077).

[12] There are two recensions of *Hikayat Iskandar*, which while having differing beginnings and endings, are otherwise extremely similar in content (Winstedt, 1938a: 5; Van Leeuwen, 1937: 28-35). Winstedt (1938a) has produced a very useful English summary of the text.

notional world received in translation from the Middle East and then absorbed into the Malay literary imaginaton.

The list of places referred to in *Hikayat Iskandar* as having been visited by Iskandar is long, and there is little benefit in naming each of those places in turn. However, it is worth spending some time looking at the extent of geographical knowledge that is revealed by such detail. The focus of the *hikayat*, indeed one might say the geographical core, is firmly centred on the Middle East. Iskandar is said by some to be the son of a ruler from Rum, by others a ruler from Persia. Also when explaining his ancestry, Istakhr[13], Babil[14] and Ajam are listed. It is told that Iskandar studied the Quran in Istanbul, under Aristotle, and succeeds his grandfather as king of Macedonia. Iskandar takes Iraq and besieges Madain[15]. Perhaps the most westerly location mentioned is Andalus[16], from which Iskandar crosses on ships and a bridge to the land of the Habshis[17]. There is also mention of Siqiliya[18] and Afriqiya.

At one point in the story, Iskandar hears that Persia, Hind, China, Turki and Mesir are worshipping fire, i.e. are not embracing Islam. For traditional Malay literature, this list of countries is a very typical one, a list of countries that seems to encapsulate the notion of the whole world. Following on from this information, the rest of the *hikayat* is very much devoted to telling of Iskandar's extensive travels. As well as a whole host of kingdoms and cities in the Middle East, several rivers are also named, including the Furat (Euphrates), Jaihun[19] and Nile. Iskandar is described as travelling quite considerably in Hind and China. In addition to Hind, other places visited on the Indian sub-continent are Sind and Kashmir as well as the island of Ceylon. The places mentioned in China, a land described as being made up of 300

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[13] In south of present day Iran.
[14] In present day Iraq.
[15] In present day Iran.
[16] Deriving from the Arabic Andalus which corresponds to Southern Spain.
[17] Deriving from the Arabic Habashi, meaning Abyssinia (present day Ethiopia), but sometimes referring to Africa generally.
[18] Sicily.
[19] Corresponds to the Amu Darya, also known as the Oxus River, which rises in the Pamirs and flows mainly North-West through the Hindu Kush, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan eventually joining the Aral Sea.

countries, are confusing[20]. After visiting China, Iskandar journeys back westwards, and while many of the place names given can be geographically located, others seem to come more from the realm of fantasy.

A text which has obvious borrowings from *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* is *Sejarah Melayu (*Winstedt, 1938b; Soeratno, 1991). This text contrasts with *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* in that it was written by a Malay, and indeed is primarily concerned with events within the Malay world[21]. In addition to the internal affairs of Melaka, the text is mainly concerned with relations with other Malay states such as Pahang and Pasai, though there is also considerable mention made of Majapahit and Siam. More distant lands such as China and India also figure at various points in the chronicle. From these references it is possible to discern something of the literary understanding of the world in this text.

Sejarah Melayu, begins with the story of Iskandar Zulkarnain, and tells of the country of Macedonia, a land to the west of India:

> **Raja Iskandar, anak Raja Darab, Rum[22] bangsanya, Makaduniah nama negerinya, Zulkarnain gelarannya, sekali peristiwa baginda berjalan hendak melihat matahari terbit; maka baginda sampai pada serokan negeri Hindi.** (Situmorang dan Teeuw, 1952: 4)
>
> When Raja Iskandar the Two-Horned, son of Raja Darab, a person of Rum, of the country of Macedonia, set out to see where the sun rises, he came to the river bordering India.

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[20] The two countries named are Khaqa, the midmost of China's 300 countries, which Winstedt suggests might refer to Khan, and the most distant of China's countries is named as Waq. Also while in China, the countries of Sanjab and Ilab are converted, and the diamond mines of Mount Fir (Ophir) are a source of interest.

[21] It is therefore, like *Hikayat Aceh* and *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, what might be called 'an indigenous text'.

[22] There is considerable difficulty with the translation of 'Rum', for it can mean Turkey, the Byzantine Empire and Greece. While it is not possible to state with certainty, it seems that generally in traditional Malay texts it is Turkey or the Byzantine Empire that is implied by the term 'Rum'. Reid has argued that there has long been a Malay tradition of a great ruler in the West, the *Raja Rum*. When Ottoman Turkey emerged as a power in the Indian Ocean, it became the obvious inheritor of the considerable tradition about the Raja Rum (Reid, 1969: 396). Ambiguity in the use of Rum in Arabic literature is noted by Bosworth (1995: 601). Bosworth remarks that while Rum is used interchangeably with references to the Romans, the Byzantines and the Christian Melkites, the reference is most often to the Byzantines.

It is sometimes perhaps forgotten that the first mentions of Europeans and of a European country, even in this most Malay of texts, does not arise with the description of events surrounding the coming of the Portuguese, but rather, through the referral to Macedonia. Through the incorporation of the story of Iskandar with his Macedonian origins, taken from *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, this Europen land is actually linked with the very creation myth of the Malays. However, this link should not be over-emphasised. The mythic Iskandar simply comes from a land located in a vague and amorphous region beyond India. The notion of Macedonia does not reverberate through the text, in the way that Iskandar does. For according to the structure and meaning of *Sejarah Melayu,* the most important aspect of Iskandar is not his origins, but rather his religion, Islam. Within the text, Iskandar serves not as a link back to Macedonia, but rather as a means of connecting the Malay people to Islam, through the appearance of descendents of Iskandar Zulkarnain at Bukit Siguntang.

Early on in *Sejarah Melayu*, when describing the history of various rulers in India, several references are made to the fact that these rulers were so powerful that they were the rulers of East and West. Again, hinting at the influence of *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, the Arabic terms, *Masyrik* and *Maghrib*, are used. The limitations of East and West are never explained, but they are hinted at in the following quote:

> **Kata setengah riwayat, Raja Sulan itu daripada anak cucu Raja Nusirwan Adil, anak Raja Kibad Sjahriar, Raja Mashrik dan Maghrib; melainkan Allah subhanahu wa taala juga yang mengetahuinya. Tetapi akan Raja Sulan itu raja besar sekali di dalam antara segala Raja2 Hindi dan Sindi, sekaliannya itu dalam tangannya dan segala raja2 yang di bawah angin ini sekalian takluk kepada baginda itu.** (Situmorang dan Teeuw, 1952: 11)
>
> According to some accounts Raja Sulan was a descendent of Raja Nusirwan Adil, son of Raja Kibad Sjahriar, Raja of the East and the West. Whether or not that is so is only known to God Almighty. However that may be, this Raja Shulan was a mighty raja, to whom all the Rajas of Sind and Hind and all the rajas of these regions below the winds were subject.

The implication here is that being ruler over Hind and Sind, (lands to the west, or 'above the wind', *di atas angin*), and the lands below the wind (*di bawah angin*, lands to the east), while not perhaps equivalent to ruling over East and West, equates to

ruling over a vast area, in the eyes of the Malay author. This idea is developed further in *Sejarah Melayu* when describing the jurisdiction of Raja Sulan's successor, Raja Suran, who ruled over all the rajas from east to west (*masyrik ke maghrib*) with the exception of China (Situmorang dan Teeuw, 1952: 11).

The importance of China, and the reality of Melaka's awareness of having such a mighty power within its sphere of activity, is apparent on several occasions in *Sejarah Melayu*. The first instance of such a portrayal relates to the reaction of China on hearing that Raja Culan was intending to invade their country. China, fearing destruction should the Indian troops reach their shores, sets about a cunning trick, in order to convince Raja Culan that China was too distant to make a journey there viable. As a result, the equilibrium between the two great powers of India and China was maintained, with the Malay world as the middle point. Despite the great power of China, Melaka is never portrayed as being in a position of subservience to its neighbour. Rather the two states are always shown as being in a state of friendship. This is best exemplified by the story of the sickness of the Chinese emperor, in which the emperor develops a chloasma, after hearing that the ruler of Melaka had sent obeisance to him. The illness is cured by drinking water that had been used to wash the Melaka sultan's feet, and thereafter the Chinese emperor orders that Chinese rulers should never demand obeisance from the Melaka rulers, but rather friendship on equal terms[23].

While it is often stated within *Sejarah Melayu* that Melaka was an important and prosperous trading city, bustling with many traders, the detail rarely extends beyond these simple observations. It is useful here to remember Kratz's observation that traditional Malay literary texts pay little attention to any foreigners (Kratz, 2000: 26). Those references to thriving trade serve to illustrate the fact that the Malay ideal of a well ruled state had been met, rather than to inform the audience of any specific details related to the particularities and specifics of that trade and of the merchants who travelled to Melaka. Even in the description of the ceremonial of the court established by Sultan Muhammad Shah, very little mention is made of ceremonies

[23] A similar idea comes through in *Hikayat Aceh* when a cure for the sultan of Istanbul can only be found in Aceh.

regarding foreigners. There is however some detail regard how letters from other states should be received, and the custom dictating the giving of robes of honour to foreign envoys. The only states to receive particular mention, in terms of how their envoys are to be treated, come from within the Malay world, Pasai and Haru[24].

Our attention should perhaps also be drawn to descriptions of and the understanding of the Middle East in *Sejarah Melayu*. Just as in *Hikayat raja Pasai* there is a section that relates the story of the Islamization of Melaka. In both texts a ship is sent from Mecca to Samudra in order to spread the faith of Islam. The sending of this ship is described in minimal detail. In both texts the ship stops off in a city on the Coromandel Coast before continuing on to Sumatra. There is some confusion over the name of the city[25], but it is generally understood as referring to Ma'abri. As Marrison (1951: 31) has argued, the inclusion of Ma'abri[26] in the story of the coming of Islam, confirms the idea that the first Islamic mission to the Malay world came from southern India. It is the *fakir* from southern India who stays in Samudera to spread the faith, while the captain of the ship simply returns to Mecca. This story, while clearly demonstrating awareness of Mecca, places a much greater emphasis on India. It is India and its people, whom the Malays are well accustomed to dealing with, that has a firm place in the Malay geographical imagination[27].

Hikayat Aceh[28], a text in the main concerned with relating the ancestry of the ruler Iskandar Muda, and also a year-by-year account of his youth, contains three particularly interesting episodes in terms of our understanding of the traditional Malay view of the world. Firstly, there is the episode relating the coming of the Portuguese

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[24] This particular mention probably serves to signify that Haru and Pasai are recognised as being independent sovereign states (Brown, 1952: 220).

[25] In *Hikayat raja Pasai*, the name of the city is debated. Hill (1960, 177: note 25) read the city's name as Ma'abri, though Jones argues that it should be read as Mengiri. This word can be found on p.25 of the facsimile of the text (Jones, 1999). However Jones still accepts that the place referred to is most likely located on the Coromandel coast (Jones, 1999: 108). Marrsion (1951, 31), noting that in the Jawi script the two names differ only in terms of diacritical dots, suggests that the name of the city was most probably confused and misread/misunderstood by later copyists, for as is suggested by *Sejarah Melayu* (Raffles MS no.18), the intention of the original chronicler must have been to refer to Ma'abri.

[26] Ma'abar is a name of Arabic origin, initially applied to the southern Indian ports of Madura and Tanjore, on the straits opposite Sri Lanka, but then came to be applied to the whole of the Coromandel coast. (Marrison, 1951: 31)

[27] Indeed as Marrison points out, the whole of *Hikayat raja Pasai*, is coloured by a southern Indian background (1951: 36).

ship, mentioned in Chapter Two. Secondly, there is a section that relates to the visit of a Siamese delegation to Aceh and a subsequent visit by an Acehnese delegation to Siam. Thirdly, is the report of the Turkish embassy to Aceh and a return embassy to Turkey.

The episode involving Siam begins with the Siamese ruler sending a two-man delegation to Aceh. This part of the narrative is concerned only with describing how the delegates were astounded to see the future ruler's skills in commanding horses and elephants. After this the Acehnese ruler sent three delegates to Siam. The Siamese ruler hears the reports of the Acehnese delegates and is very much astounded by the greatness of Aceh, to the extent that he calls on the rulers of Cambodia, Chiengmai, Lancing and Paslula[29], together with delegations from China and Champa, to tell them of Aceh's greatness. The response of these rulers and representatives is to assure the Siamese ruler that they had never heard anything to equal what had been told about the greatness of Aceh.

As has already been seen in *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* and *Sejarah Melayu* the imagined world of traditional Malay literature is often split into two halves, East and West. Just as in *Sejarah Melayu*, in *Hikayat Aceh* the Malay world is portrayed as being at the meeting point between these two worlds, though with Aceh rather than Melaka as the centre of power. The story concerning Siam, and the world to the east, is immediately followed in *Hikayat Aceh,* by a section looking in the opposite direction, westwards to the other sphere of Malay interest and knowledge, and specifically to Turkey (*Rum*), the country which was perhaps seen as being the greatest of the Islamic states at the time. The passage is undoubtedly grounded in historical reality, albeit a reality that is somewhat confused[30]. *Hikayat Aceh* relates that the Turkish sultan, suffering from some sort of illness, is advised to send a

[28] See Braginsky (forthcoming) for a detailed discussion of the likely date and origins of this text.
[29] Chiang Mai is in present day Northern Thailand. Lancing most probably refers to Lan Chang, later to be known as Luang Prabang in the region of the upper Mekong in present day Laos. Paslula may refer to Pitsanulok.
[30] See Reid (1969), Braginsky (forthcoming).

delegation to Aceh, the source for the ingredients of a cure[31]. The delegation travels via Yemen to Aceh. On arrival in Aceh the two Turkish delegates, together with the ship's captain, are forced to wait for the Acehnese ruler who is away at war. Eventually the victorious ruler returns to Aceh and he orders preparations to be made for the reception of the Turkish delegation. After a number of lost pages of the manuscript, the story picks up again in Turkey, with the delegates regaling their adventures and experiences. The city of Aceh is portrayed in a splendid light. On hearing the very lengthy descriptions of Aceh[32] the sultan declares:

> **Hai kamu segala wazir, pada bicaraku pada zaman dahulu kala jua dijadikan Allah Ta'ala dua orang raja Islam yang amat besar dalam dunia ini, seorang Nabi Allah Sulaiman, seorang Raja Iskandar juga, seperti sembah Celebi Ahmad dan Celebi Ridwan ini. Maka pada zaman kita sekarang ini pun ada jua dijadikan Allah Ta'ala dua orang raja yang amat besar dalam alam dunia ini. Maka yang daripada pihak Maghrib kitalah raja yang besar dan daripada pihak Masyrik itu Seri Sultan Perkasa Alam raja yang besar dan raja yang mengeraskan agama Allah dan agama Rasul Allah.** (Iskandar, 2001: 96-97)
>
> Oh all you ministers, according to my understanding, in times past, two great rulers were created here on earth by Allah, one was the prophet Sulaiman, and one was Raja Iskandar, as the nobles Ahmad and Ridhwan say. In this era there are also two great rulers who have been created by Allah here on earth. In the West there is I, myself, who am great, and in the East, there is the *Seri Sultan Perkasa Alam,* a great ruler, one who strengthens the religion of Allah and His Prophet.

While the Turkish ruler is hearing of the greatness of Aceh, several other rulers and ministers from *Parsi, Ajami, Arab* and *Mughal*, are also called to listen (Iskandar, 2001: 98). All these people, representing the key lands of the West, are astounded to hear of the greatness of the Acehnese ruler to the extent that they declare that it is right and fitting that he is named *Perkasa Alam* (The Might of the World).

Just as the passage about Siam saw the construction of a world with China at its outer reaches to the east, so the passage concerning Turkey sees a western world with Turkey on the outer limits. Aceh is portrayed as being the equal to Turkey on the opposite side of the Islamic world. The allusion to the previous great Islamic rulers, including Iskandar, who of course in the Malay myth of origin has such an important

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[31] Parallels can be drawn here with the story of the illness of the Chinese ruler in *Sejarah Melayu* discussed above. In each case the importance of the respective Malay sultanate is demonstrated through the provision of a cure for the particular malady.

[32] Part of which is lost from the only surviving manuscript.

role, not only locates the current Acehnese ruler as being equal in rank with the Turkish ruler, but also claims him to be an Islamic ruler as great in authority as Iskandar. This narrative while undoubtedly serving to perpetuate and entrench the position of Aceh as a great Islamic state, also tells us much about its view of Aceh in relation to the world, placing it at the centre of the Islamic world, looking westwards, and the Chinese dominated world to the east.

As will be discussed more fully in the second part of this chapter, the place of Portugal in *Hikayat Aceh* is obscure. Portugal, and particularly the Portuguese, are certainly mentioned in the text. However while the Portuguese might travel to Aceh, the Portuguese metropolis has not yet entered into the geographic view of the world as revealed within the text.

Perhaps the widest variety of geographical references to be found in any Malay literary text, are those related in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. It has been argued convincingly (Braginsky, 1990a) that the text as we know it today originates from Johor and that it is an allegory for events occurring there between the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries[33]. While the earlier part of *Hikayat Hang Tuah* has already attracted much scholarly attention, it is the second part of the text that is more interesting for this discussion[34], being primarily concerned with various embassies and missions abroad led by Hang Tuah at the behest of his sultan. Hang Tuah is described as travelling extensively and indeed on his last mission, when he is waiting to see the ruler in the land of Rum, he tells an official of the extent of his travels;

> **Maka Laksamana beriwayatlah tatkala ia diutuskan ke Benua Keling lalu ke benua Cina, dan tatkala ia ke Majapahit dan tatkala pergi ke benua Siam dan tatkala pergi ke Berunei. Maka Laksamana pun berbuat katalah tatkala ia diutuskan pergi ke negeri Mekah dan Madinah dan negeri Hafsah dan negeri Peringgi dan negeri Wolanda.** (Kassim Ahmad, 1975: 501)

[33] There is a strong argument to make for the idea that *Hikayat Hang Tuah* is a composite text, and as Kratz suggests (2004) a proper scholarly study of the Hang Tuah tradition of texts might well reveal links to other written or oral traditions. Parallel episodes in *Sejarah Melayu* and *Bustanus salatin* have already been described (Iskandar, 1970). While admitting the potential dangers of generalising on the basis of one text, the debt that *Hikayat Hang Tuah* owes to the Malay tradition generally, allows us to construct literary understandings of the world, as seen by the Malays, as notions evolved during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

[34] This latter part of the text only comes under scrutiny in Chambert-Loir (1994) and Parnickel (1978).

> The Laksamana [Hang Tuah] told of when he was sent to the land of India. Next he went to the land of China, and when he went to Majapahit, and when he went to the land of Siam and when he went to Brunei. Then the Laksamana told of when he was sent to Mecca and Medina and to Ethiopia and to Portugal and Holland.

While he also visited many other places, the countries mentioned in the above quote are suggestive of a geographical understanding of the world which is typical of many Malay texts, though perhaps never so clearly outlined as they are in *Hikayat Hang Tuah.* Reid points out the close basis in reality of the voyages to South India and South China undertaken by Hang Tuah (1993: 66). Harun Mat Piah *et al.* (1993: 256-7) have argued that the totality of lands visited by Hang Tuah, which also included Egypt (*Mesir*), constitute the geographic extent of the world known to the Malays (*iaitu alam geografi yang diketahui oleh bangsa Melayu pada masa itu*).

The two last countries on the list quoted above, Portugal and Holland, were not actually visited by the hero within the narrative of *Hikayat Hang Tuah.* Chambert-Loir (1994: 53) argues that Hang Tuah was claiming to have visited countries that he had never actually set foot in, and certainly it is possible to see this embellishment of the truth as an example of Hang Tuah's use of cunning in securing an audience with the ruler in Istanbul. Holland and Portugal would certainly have been the two best known of the European powers, and thus they would be the European countries judged by Malays as most likely to impress the Turkish sultan. However, the reason for including Portugal and Holland in the list of countries supposedly visited, may be more complex than this.

Taking first of all the question of Hang Tuah's supposed contact with Portugal, the mention quoted above is not the only reference to the Portuguese in *Hikayat Hang Tuah.* Most importantly there are the passages relating to the Portuguese attempts to secure a base in Melaka and the subsequent attack on the sultanate. However mention is also made of a Portuguese presence in China, indeed Hang Tuah becomes involved in a dispute there with the bad mannered Portuguese, and this incident occurs in the narrative prior to the arrival of the Portuguese in Melaka. Thus, experience of the Portuguese operating within China and the Malay world is well recorded. There is also the possibility that when Hang Tuah claims to

have visited *negeri Ferringih,* he is actually referring to Manila[35], a location much more firmly mapped into the imagination of the world revealed in this text. It is true that *Hikayat Hang Tuah* also displays knowledge of a land called Portugal as is demonstrated in the following quote:

> **Maka kapal Feringgi di negeri Manila dan Portugal pun datanglah empat puluh buah membantu temannya.** (Kassim Ahmad, 1975: 522)
>
> Then forty Portuguese ships from Manila and Portugal came to assist their friends.

The Portuguese metropole may be referred to, and it is a place that Portuguese individuals are very occasionally portrayed as disappearing to and arriving from, but nonetheless it is a place that is obscure and without concrete location in the imagining of Hang Tuah's world.

At first sight, Hang Tuah's claim to have visited *negeri Wolanda* (Holland) is seemingly even more out of step with the narrative than the assertion that he had visited Portugal. The only mention of Holland in *Hikayat Hang Tuah* comes in its closing pages, with the attack on the Portuguese in Melaka by the Dutch, assisted by Johor. Of course, remembering the period when the text was written, namely between the late 1600's and early 1700's (Braginsky, 1998: 355), it is not so astonishing that Hang Tuah would be making the claim to have visited *negeri Wolanda.* Holland was already well entrenched in the Dutch East Indies by this time. Doubtless, by this period, Johor was quite familiar with the Dutch due to their presence in the region. While other European powers were undoubtedly known to the Malays at that time, it was Holland and Portugal that, according to their positions in Southeast Asia, were the most important of the European nations operating in the region. Hence it is of no surprise if contacts with these two nations were deemed most likely to impress the Turkish official who controlled access to the Turkish ruler.

Turning now to the actual voyages undertaken by Hang Tuah, in general very little indication is given with regard to their length. The sea voyages tend to be passed

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[35] This suggestion has been made by Koster (forthcoming a), noting that during the period of the Union of Spain and Portugal, it is quite understandable that Portuguese ships should be described as coming from Manila.

over in a few brief words, though this is not untypical of epic genres. Nonetheless there are some details that allow for further understanding of the author's imagining of the locations visited. Three of the voyages stand out as a result of the more comprehensive descriptions given, and it is perhaps no coincidence that those three journeys were to the most distant lands; namely to China, India and Turkey. The extra embellishment relating to the journey to China is minimal, telling only that the length of the journey was two months. The description of the journey to *benua Keling,* or southern India, is far more thorough, both in terms of the route followed and also the journey's duration. There is an account of the various difficulties that are overcome and Hang Tuah's meeting with Nabi Khidir on the island of Biram Dewa. The fact that the journey was via the mythical island of Biram Dewa puts the journey to India into a specific class. It is not just distant geographically, but also takes on an air of the fantastic. The inclusion of these 'supernatural' elements, the like of which are not, for example, included in the description of the voyage to China, cannot simply be ignored. If we suppose that these motifs are residual elements from an oral or folkloristic tradition, then it must be considered significant that this motif is retained in this text. The journeys westwards, to places that were definitely part of the Malay imagination, take a somewhat mysterious, and indeed supernatural flavour, and must stand in comparison with the many journeys nearer to *patria* and also to China.

The journey to *Rum* is not only the lengthiest of the voyages described in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, but also the most comprehensively represented including the description of stop-offs such as Aceh, Judah, Mecca and Egypt (among other things the river Nile is mentioned). The great distance to Turkey is hinted at several times in *Hikayat Hang Tuah.* The distance is so great, we are told, that this is the first time that Melaka has ever sent a deputation there. Hang Tuah's response on hearing that he is to travel to this distant land is as follows:

> **'Hai Laksamana, apa bicara Laksamana kita hendak suruh ke benua Rom itu?' Maka sembah Laksamana, 'Daulat tuanku, selagi ada nyawa dalam badan patik ini, insya Allah Taala, jangankan ke benua Rom, jikalau dititahkan pergi ke Bukit Qaf sekalipun patik pergi juga'.** (Kassim Ahmad, 1975: 468-9)

> 'Oh Laksamana, what do you say, for I wish to command you to go to the land of Turkey?' The Laksamana responded: 'My lord, as long as there is a soul in my body, if it is willed by God Almighty, not only would I go to the land of Turkey, but I would even go to the Qaf mountains, if I were commanded'.

This statement by Hang Tuah ties in with his earlier declaration on being asked to go to China, that even if he were to be ordered to Rum he would obey the command (*Jika ke benua Rum pun dapat,)* such was his allegiance to the sultan of Melaka. Conveyed within these two declarations, is the idea that the most distant land that Hang Tuah could possibly travel to would be the land of *Rum*. To travel further than that, would mean, figuratively speaking, travelling to the edge of the world, to the Qaf mountains. With this idea in mind, it can be seen that while the more distant lands of Portugal and Holland might be acknowledged in the text, it is almost as lands without concrete location in the imagination of the narrative.

A consideration of the four texts described above enables the drawing of a map of the world as understood by the traditional Malay writers, prior to, or at least at the beginning of, the era of European activity in the region. Certainly this was not a static picture, there were developments that must also be acknowledged, but nonetheless a general picture can be mapped. The extent of the world common to all four texts reaches from across India, Persia, Arabia, Egypt and Rum to the west and as far as Siam and China to the east[36]. While in *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, the Middle East seems to be at the centre of the notional world, in all three of the indigenous texts, the world clearly centres on Nusantara, with lands to the west dominated by India and Rum, and lands to the east dominated by China. This division between East and West, or *Maghrib* and *Masyrik,* is a theme that runs through all the texts[37].

Towards the most western extreme is the great Islamic centre of Rum, which in both *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and *Hikayat Aceh* is portrayed as the great Islamic power in the West, contrasting with the great Islamic centres of Melaka and Aceh, respectively, in the East. There is surprisingly little interest in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. In the narratives of the coming of Islam, it is India that takes on a greater

[36] This image of the world can be seen in numerous other texts as well. For example in *Hikayat Raja Pasai* Tun Beraim Bapa suggests a similar group of countries when he declares that he would prevail against Pasai, Siam, China, Java and Kalinga (India) (Jones, 1999: 56).

[37] Reid has pointed out that the association of the ruler of Rum in the West and the ruler of China in the East is to be found in many myths of origin and folktales from Sumatra and Malaya (Reid 1969; 395).

importance than the Arabian cities. In *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, the hero pauses there to perform the Haj, but even this is soon passed over in the narrative, in haste to get to the centre of the Islamic world, Istanbul. While there are numerous geographical references to Middle Eastern cities in *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*, these are far fewer in the later indigenous texts. That such information was still being brought to the Malay world is evident from *Bustanus salatin*, but it seems that the Malay authors were less interested in these long lists of distant locations. Beyond Rum, references which are made in *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain* to Sicily, Africa and Andalus, do not survive into the indigenous works.

On the other hand, those indigenous Malay texts were able to incorporate knowledge of the world to the east that is far more complex and factually based than is apparent in *Hikayat Iskandar Zulkarnain*. In particular the cities and states of Nusantara and mainland Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, Chiang Mai, Luang Prabang and Siam, are listed. While China is the greatest power and also the land at the most eastern extreme, *Hikayat Hang Tuah* shows glimmerings of knowledge of the world beyond China with the mention of Japanese individuals. The other main development to be seen in *Sejarah Melayu*, and even more so in *Hikayat Aceh* and *Hikayat Hang Tuah,* is the inclusion of the Europeans. However, in these first depictions the Portuguese and Dutch are Europeans operating within Southeast Asia. The origins of these individuals, while occasionally alluded to in vague terms, is neither elaborated upon, nor apparently of particular interest to the authors and remain something of a blank spot on the Malay map of the world.

The notion of Britain in traditional Malay literature

As has been mentioned in the above section on the Malay map of the world, reconstructed from literary texts, Europe was generally a blank space on this map. However, by the early twentieth century the place of Britain on the geographical map became quite clear. In order for that space to be filled in, the understanding of Britain in Malay literature went through a number of stages, which will be described in the next part of this chapter.

We have already seen in Chapter Two, that the texts of our corpus mentioning the British, were written over a period of time from the seventeenth century through to the early twentieth century. For the purposes of this chapter, these texts have been categorised into four groups, based on the Malay imagining of Britain as evident in the texts themselves. The first category comprises those texts containing the earliest fleeting mentions of the British, characteristic of the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Following on from these initial glimpses, the second category is made up of texts in which there is recognition of the British as a political entity, though as an entity which seems to exist and function almost completely within the Malay world. The next development in the Malay literary imagination of the British, is of a Britain based in Bengal, and if there is any extension of that view as far as the metropole in Europe, it is still very vague and ambiguous. Finally, as we move into the middle of the nineteenth century, previous ambiguities tend to diminish and the image of Britain, including for the first time the metropole, takes on a clarity not previously seen in Malay literary texts.

First sporadic mentions

Perhaps the earliest mention of the British in any Malay text is to be found in *Hikayat Aceh*[38]. This first literary representation of the British is however a somewhat confused affair, for it seems that a false nationality is ascribed to two men who were in reality British:

> **...maka pada suatu masa datang antusan daripada Raja Pertugal dua orang, seorang bernama Dong Dawis dan seorang bernama Dong Tumis membawa surat dan membawa bingkis daripada Raja Pertugal dari kuda tizi Pertugali dua ekor ...** (Iskandar, 1958: 136)
>
> ...at one time there came from the King of Portugal a delegation of two people, one called Dom Dawis, and one called Dom Tumis, bringing a letter and gifts from the King of Portugal in the form of two thoroughbred horses...

It seems highly likely that the two men referred to in the *hikayat* as *Dong Dawis* and *Dong Tumis* were actually Britons by the names of John Davis and Master Tomkins

[38] Written in the early seventeenth century. Braginsky discusses dating of the text (forthcoming).

(Penth, 1969: 58-60). The most obvious evidence for this is the account of John Davis, who served as a pilot on a Dutch voyage to Aceh under Captain Cornelius Houtman in 1599 (Purchas, 1905: Vol 2, 305-326). Davis' detailed account of this voyage records the name of this Master Tomkins (Purchas: 1905: Vol 2, 325).

The question arises concerning the possible reasons for the author of *Hikayat Aceh*'s mistaken identification of the two seamen as being Portuguese. It may be that the author did not fully appreciate differences in the nationalities of European visitors, and that according to his understanding they were simply all Portuguese[39]. The Portuguese were of course the first Europeans to come into contact with the Acehnese, and at the beginning of the seventeenth century they were still by far the best known of the Europeans. However at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Dutch and British were also beginning to attempt to engage in trade and diplomacy with the sultanate, and certainly other evidence suggests that the Acehnese ruler had a quite sufficient understanding of the various European rivals. Davis himself records that the Acehnese sultan apparently made a specific request to meet the British men aboard the Dutch ships, aware that they were different in language and attire from the Dutchmen who formed the majority of the crew. Davis reported on his meeting with the sultan, 'Hee enquired much of England, of the Queene, of her Basha's, and how she could hold warres with so great a King as the Spaniards? (for he thinketh that Europe is all Spanish)' (Purchas, 1905: Vol 2, 313).

Another consideration must be the perceived understanding of the postulated audience. If the author intended the text for appreciation by a wider audience, it may be that the author was simply using the label of Portuguese, as a general term for white men. This would be the nationality most familiar to the audience, and therefore the most likely to be understood when portraying Europeans, even if they were not actually of Portuguese nationality. Arguments for this wider audience however are weak, particularly in view of the fact that only two incomplete manuscripts are in existence, which does little to suggest the text ever gained much popularity. However

[39] It should be noted that the author has not simply used the term *Feringgi*, which could be seen as having a wider meaning, denoting Europeans generally, but rather the country of *Pertugal* has been specifically named.

if the *hikayat* was aimed only at the elite of the royal court, then as discussed above, other sources show that there was an understanding of the different loyalties and races in Europe. The author would surely expect the elite to be conversant with such differences, and thus reflect those differences in the text.

The reason behind the giving of Portuguese nationality to these two Britons can probably be explained by a closer consideration of the meaning behind the story in which they occur. It should be remembered that the story in which these two 'Portuguese' envoys appear, involves the near-humiliation of the Acehnese ruler. The trainer of the Portuguese horses claims they are superior to the sultan's horses which originated from Istanbul. Moreover, it is suggested that only a Portuguese can mount the horses. The prize of a Portuguese fort on Acehnese territory is on offer should the claim be borne out. The day is only saved when the young Acehnese prince (Iskandar Muda) mounts the horse while the Portuguese trainer fails to do so[40]. Thus the purpose of this story, as with the whole of *Hikayat Aceh,* is to eulogise the young Iskandar Muda, showing him to be a great prince and a great ruler in the making. It is perhaps no surprise that the victory is presented as being over the Portuguese, who would still have been seen as the greatest of the European powers known at that time[41], and, in addition, were the most powerful adversary of the Acehnese.

While there are no other texts that give such a confused portrayal of the British as we have seen in *Hikayat Aceh*, several texts from the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, such as *Syair perang Mengkasar* and *Syair Kompeni Wolanda berperang dengan Cina*, give short and vague mentions of the British. In each case the reasons for their presence, their geographical origins, and even the idea of the British as an organised political entity, is not apparent. Raja Culan's *Misa Melayu,* dating from the second half of the eighteenth century is a typical example of this type of mention. Towards the end of this text, there is a fairly short description of a

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[40] This story has striking parallels with the story in *Hikayat raja Pasai* in which Tun Beraim Bapa is ordered by his sultan to mount an uncontrollable horse in the presence of foreign visitors from India, including among them a champion warrior. Tun Beraim Bapa mounts the horse and soon has it prancing around like a strutting peacock (*seperti merak mengigal lakunya*; Jones, 1999: 42-3).

[41] Koster has brought attention to the fact that there was a Portuguese priest who came to Aceh in 1600 requesting that the Portuguese be given a fort in return for help against the Johorese (Koster, forthcoming b). Thus Koster suggests that Acehnese memories of the visit of the two Britons on Houtman's ship has been confused with the visit of the Portuguese priest.

meeting with a British ship and the consequent exchange of two cannons, owned by the British, for some tin[42]. No explanation is given as to who the British are or how they come to be in the area. Neither are we told whether such trade has been conducted before. The only detail given is that the British captain has come from Bengal (*Kapitan Inggeris dari Bengala*). Thus in *Misa Melayu* we see the earliest allusion to the British centre of Bengal, a connection that is made in many of the early nineteenth century Malay texts. When considering the British, Raja Culan's imagining does not stretch as far as Europe, and this is also the case concerning the Dutch, who feature much more prominently in this text. Thus when narrating events concerning the Dutch, with their base in Perak on the Malay Peninsula at Tanjung Putus, the author does not connect this outpost back to Europe, but rather the link is made, via Melaka, to a Dutch raja in Batavia:

> **Maka tersebutlah perkataan orang Holanda duduk di Tanjung Putus itu. Ada pun Holanda itu disuruhkan oleh rajanya dari negeri Betawi lalu ke Melaka; dari Melaka langsung ke negeri Perak.** (Raja Culan, 1962: 29)
>
> Now it comes to mention the Dutch presence in Tanjung Putus. The Dutch were ordered to Melaka by their raja in Batavia. and from Melaka directly to Perak.

Later on in the text, it becomes perfectly clear that Raja Culan, in describing communications and negotiations between the Dutch and Perak, understands completely the Dutch chain of command radiating from Batavia. Certainly, during the late eighteenth century the Dutch presence in the Malay world was far more entrenched than was the British presence, and this text is a reflection of the deeper involvement of the Dutch in local affairs at the time. But despite the presence of the Dutch and also the emergence of the British, the world described in the text is still a limited one. Outsiders may enter into the intrinsically Malay world created in *Misa Melayu,* but little attention is given to where they have come from or will return to. This is also the case with Bugis attackers and Chinese and Indian traders. The British presence is in the person of individuals only, no mention is made of any allegiance that the British captain might have held, whether to a raja or to a *kompeni*[43]. Indeed,

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[42] There may be specific symbolism intended here, for whereas the Dutch were officially prohibited from selling arms to indigenous populations, the British had no such restraint.

[43] The term *Kompeni* is also used to describe the Dutch.

of all the visitors to Perak described in *Misa Melayu,* it is the British who seem to be the least significant.

Likewise a similarly vague British presence is to be found in *Syair Kompeni Wolanda berperang dengan Cina.* The opening of this *syair* contains a long list of the various nationalities that are to be found in Batavia, including not just Dutch, but also Portuguese, Swiss, Germans and British. In addition several Asian locations are mentioned, indicating not just the diversity of trade in Batavia at the time, but also the author's recognition and knowledge of the vast array of nationalities to be found there. The other mentions of Britain or of British individuals in this text, do little to add to the picture of Britain as understood by the author, aside from reinforcing our understanding that the author is distinguishing these individuals from the Dutch, who receive frequent mention in this text. The reporting of the sending of a princess to British Bengkulu, demonstrates a familiarity with the different spheres of interest and influence maintained by Britain and Holland. It gives a picture of the British working solely within the Malay Indonesian world, with no linkage made to their origins. Similarly, with regard to the story of the Briton who finds some hidden treasure, no background is given, and the audience is left none the wiser as to how or why that British individual came to be in the environs of *Pulau Sirih.*

Thus, in this first group of texts we see a representation of the British that gives only vague reference to political grouping. In contrast to the Dutch, Britons are generally portrayed as acting privately, without the strong trading and military backup that is ascribed to the Dutch. In many respects the British are very much one group among many who pass through the Malay world. The only clue we are given to a more permanent presence is the report of the sending of the princess to British Bengkulu. Although the picture has undoubtedly moved on from the first confused mention of Britons in *Hikayat Aceh,* the authors of these texts consider that they are no more worth remarking upon than any of the other myriad of ethnic groups plying the waters of the archipelago.

British as an organised political grouping

The next group of texts continues an idea that began in the previous section, where we have already seen the first vague references to Bengal and to Bengkulu. However, in the group of texts discussed below, a Malay understanding of the British as an organised political grouping emerges. Perhaps the best example of this is to be found in *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda.*

For the most part the narrative of *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* centres on the relationship between Nakhoda Muda and the Dutch resident based at Banten. However it is the arrival of the British on the scene that causes the deterioration in the relationship with the Dutch. The explanations within the text demonstrate a clear understanding of the various rivalries of the European powers.

Di dalam bulan itu jua kedengaran khabar Bangkahulu perang dengan Perancis itu, lalu di Kerui banyaklah orang Kerui pindah ke Semangka mengadab Kyai Demang Purwasedana. Maka kata Kyai Demang itu: 'Diamlah segala saudara hamba sama2 dengan hamba di dalam Semangka ini; jangan takut kepada Perancis, tiada mengapa, karena Semangka ini pegangan Kompeni Holanda. Jikalau sudah senang nenggeri Bangkahulu, kalau hendak pulang ke Kerui, pulang pulak, tiada mengapa.'

Syahdan ada lima bulan lamanya Perancis sudah berlayar dari Bangkahulu, khabar orang, maka datang perahu dari Bantan disuruh sultan dengan kemandur mengambil lada. Maka perahu itu singgah di Semangka, mintak orang yang sudah biasa di Kerui kepada Kyai Demang Purwasedana; urdi sultan dengan kemandur. Setelah sudah dapat orang, perahu itu berlayarlah ke Kerui serta dengan orang di dalam Semangka itu. Setelah dapatlah lada Kerui, oleh perahu itu dibawak ke Bantan. Tiada berapa lama antaranya maka datang pulak kompeni Inggeris ke Bangkahulu, khabar orang. Tiada lagi sultan menyuruh perahu lagi ke Kerui. (Drewes, 1961: 127-128)

That month there came news that Bengkulu had been at war with the French, and so many people from Kerui moved to Semangka to pay homage to Kyai Demang Purwasedana. Then Kyai Demang said 'all of you stay here with me in Semangka; don't be afraid of the French, there is no need, because Semangka is a Dutch possession. Once the situation in Bengkulu becomes safe again, then return to Kerui, that is not a problem'.

Then five months afterwards, it was reported that the French sailed away from Bengkulu, so people say, and a ship came from Banten, sent by the sultan to fetch pepper. That ship stopped off in Semangka, and asked Kyai Demang about the people who normally lived in Kerui. On the orders of the sultan and the commander, the ship sailed to Kerui once it had taken those people from Semangka. After getting the pepper from Kerui, the ship returned to Banten. Not long afterwards, the British came to Bengkulu, and the sultan no longer sent ships to Kerui.

The above extract clearly serves as a point of comparison with events narrated later in the text, when Kyai Demang and his people flee the Dutch controlled area and seek refuge in Kerui. The author evidently shows a full understanding of the European rivalries, primarily between the British and the Dutch. He also alludes to the impact of French activity in the region. The due consideration that indigenous rulers, in this case the sultan of Banten, had to give to the various European rivalries is clearly evoked in the sultan's decision to no longer send pepper ships to Kerui once it came under British jurisdiction.

The world described in *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* is one centring on the settlement of Semangka. This settlement, as well as being situated geographically between Banten and Bengkulu, and therefore serving as a stopping-off point for ships travelling between the two, falls politically between the Dutch sphere of authority centred on Banten and Batavia, and the British presence in Bengkulu. The position in which Kyai Demang finds himself, leads to his having to relocate his settlement in order to change his political allegiance.

Despite the clear understanding of the local rivalries, it should be noted that this text does not look beyond the Malay world. The origins and centre of British power, be that in Britain or elsewhere, is beyond the imagining of the author. The reasons for the British presence in Sumatra are not touched on in the text. Neither for that matter are the reasons for the rivalry between Britain and the other European powers. That rivalry is accepted into the local picture, without a particular questioning of where those powers hail from. In *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* it is neither unexpected, nor a cause for surprise when ships and captains of different European allegiances make their first appearances in the narrative. Indeed, it might be said that the portrayal of the European presence gives the impression of a reality that is already somewhat entrenched.

Towards the end of *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda,* the author gives further hints as to how he perceives the dominance of European powers in the archipelago, and how

this affects his understanding of geographical space. When asking for asylum Kyai Demang writes in his letter to the British official Blankin[44]:

> **Sebab maka hamba mintak tolong, karena hamba sudah berselisih dengan Kompeni Holanda. Jikalau boleh, hamba hendak diam di bawah bendera Kompeni Inggeris. Jikalau tiada boleh hamba diam di bawah bendera Kompeni Inggris, melainkan hamba mintak lalu sahaja barang di mana boleh nenggeri tempat hamba diam.** (Drewes, 1961, 148)
>
> The reason that I ask for help, is that I have had a disagreement with the Dutch. If given permission, I would like to live under the British flag. If not given permission to live under the British, I request merely to pass through in order to reach a place where it is possible for me to settle.

Further to the above passage, at the very end of the text, when explaining the whereabouts of the rest of the descendents of Kyai Demang, we are told that they have gone to various places in the archipelago including Sumatra, Bali, and Java, with the main factor linking those choices of settlement being 'wherever a settlement was outside of the jurisdiction of the Dutch, those are the places to be settled' *(di mana nenggeri yang tiada di dalam perintah Kompeni Holanda, di sanalah tempat berhenti)*. Thus the principal concept behind the classification of territory is whether or not it is under the protection of the Dutch. The territory outside Dutch jurisdiction is further divided into territory that is controlled by the British and that which is not, with land controlled by the British being preferable as a consequence of the protection that can be offered against the Dutch.

Similar images of European powers operating in the Malay world, with little, if any, reference to where those powers come from, can be seen in *Syair Mukomuko*. While different from the above text, in that it is much more typical of the genre of court chronicle, there are nonetheless similarities in the portrayal of the British. Despite a British presence in Bengkulu for over one hundred years, the European power gets hardly a mention. The British are not linked to a world outside of the immediate situation of western Sumatra. However there is something of an implication that the British position has become accepted and entrenched, so much so that British vocabulary and terminology enter into this *syair*.

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[44] Dr Blankin was the British official posted at Krui, a port on the coast well to the south of Bengkulu.

The British participation in the battle, which is presented by the author as being in support of the Sultan Pasisir Barat Syah against his son Zainal Abidin, (Tuanku Muda), is narrated towards the beginning of the *syair*. The British intervention is depicted as being decisive, with the British Captain Hamilton leading his troops made up of sepoys and Bugis against the rebellious pretender. With the troops led by Hamilton setting out to the accompaniment of European drums, and the use of the English phrase 'fall in', there is a particularly British aspect to the scene:

Ketika malam hari pun siang	When the dawn broke
Tambur dan suling dipukul orang	Drums and flutes were played
Falinlah sipai Bugis dibilang	The sepoys and Bugis fell in and numbered
Kapitan berangkat mencabut padang[45].	The Captain set off and unsheathed his sword.

(Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: 54)

Before Captain Hamilton and his troops appeared on the scene, the chaos was such that it was impossible to tell who was winning and who was losing (*tiada ketahuan alah dan menang*). However when the British arrived and marched on the rebel stronghold, the rebellious Zainal Abidin and his followers became dejected as the prince thought to himself 'I cannot fight the Company' (*Tiadalah berlawan parang Kompeni*) (Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: 54). Interestingly no indication of the nationality of British individuals is given in *Syair Mukomuko*. The only details given are the name of Captain Hamilton, together with references to the Company (*Kompeni*). No explanation is offered as to what the *Kompeni* is, or from where they have come. The *Kompeni* is simply explained as being based at Malbara (Fort Marlborough), in present day Bengkulu.

This *syair*, as a typical court chronicle, was constructed with the primary function of glorifying the past, together with court life and *adat*. Everything else is secondary to it. Thus, the royalty, the chiefs and the *rakyat* have a definite role and importance in the ideal construction of the *negeri*. The European world however remains outside this traditional world-view. It is only when the reality of the foreign presence cannot be avoided, that they intrude into the traditional Malay world

[45] While Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim transcribe his as *padang*, *pedang* would be the more regular spelling.

described in this text. The scene portraying the British is a battle scene; a battle so decisive that without the British intervention, the sultan would in all probability have fallen. Thus the narrative is momentarily forced to embrace the outside world. Despite this depiction of British intervention, however, and whatever the proximity of the European presence to the contemporary scene, it is a closeness that is not readily accepted into the traditional Malay world-view. The key concerns of this traditional view, ceremony and affairs of royalty, were not of direct concern to the Company. Thus other than in their military capacity, the British remain outside the traditional world described in *Syair Mukomuko* (Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1985: 26).

An interesting contrast with *Syair Mukomuko* is *Hikayat Pahang*. This is a particularly contradictory work and in many respects it has little in common with this group of texts. It is among the most recent works discussed in this study, having been completed in the 1930's and shows quite a complex understanding of British administration within the Malay world. Diplomacy and foreign relations are presented in an often realistic and modern way. There is a clear recognition of the different types of governance in operation, in particular the contrast between the British and the Malay systems. There is far less tendency to fit the British system into the Malay model than might be seen in earlier texts. These more modern and realistic features will be discussed in more depth in later chapters.

The reason that this text should be mentioned together with a group of texts which in many respects seem far less advanced with regard to their understanding of the British, is that like *Syair Mukomuko* and *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda*, the narrative of *Hikayat Pahang* takes place entirely within the Malay world. It is in many ways a traditional court chronicle, accounting for the history of the kingdom since it became independent from Johor. Much of the text is concerned with the Pahang civil war, and, as Gullick has pointed out, while this section provides many details surrounding fighting and diplomacy, the primary importance and emphasis of the *hikayat* is concerned with showing the strength and charisma of Sultan Ahmad (Gullick, 1992: 301-302). There is a wealth of references to the British in this text, particularly in the later section dealing with the civil war. Once British involvement in the affairs of

Pahang is referred to in the narrative, the British elsewhere in the region are then also acknowledged, however the text does not look beyond the Malay Peninsula to Bengal or to London. When terms such as *government British* or *government Inggeris*[46] are used within *Hikayat Pahang,* it is clearly the government in Singapore that is being alluded to. Thus the British often feature in matters concerning relations with other states, but very rarely in matters solely concerning court ritual. Reference is only made to the British when really necessary, when it cannot be avoided, and so *Hikayat Pahang*, like those court chronicles written in previous centuries, is primarily concerned with Malay traditions and the legitimacy of the sultanate.

In all the texts discussed in this section, an image is created where the British have become part of the complexity of power relations in the Malay world. However a view of the world beyond Nusantara is minimal or indeed non-existant. In part, the genre of some of the texts is key in limiting the world-view of the authors. In the works which are of the court chronicle genre, as Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim have argued, the very nature of this type of text, with the focus on the court traditions and the legitimacy of the sultanate, often leads to the avoidance, or ignoring, of the presence of alternate powers, except in cases where that presence cannot be avoided. Thus even where the British presence in the Malay world enters into the narratives, there is no attempt or indeed desire to look beyond the borders of the specific interests of the particular court. *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda*, as a text of a more biographical nature and as a text that originates from outside the traditional court milieu, is not limited by such constraints, but it remains limited in its world-view. Although Kyai Demang becomes, to all intents and purposes, a subject of the British, when he asks for permission to settle in territory under British control, the vision of the world is nonetheless one that is centred on Sumatra, and certainly does not look beyond, to the centre of British operations in India.

[46] It should be noted that while the term *government Inggeris* tends to be used more frequently than *government British*, there is no apparent difference in meaning intended by the author. See for example pp. 88-89 of Kalthum Jeran's edition, where it seems that the terms are even being used alternately, though it is impossible to say whether this is intentional or not.

Britain in Asia based on Bengal

The early nineteenth century sees a number of texts in which the understanding of the British, and in particular the British link with Bengal, becomes much more apparent. It represents a significant shift in the understanding of some Malay writers, in that their view begins to extend beyond the confines of the Malay world and to consider the European presence based in India.

Perhaps the most interesting text of this type is *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala,* the main focus of which is a description of the land of Bengal and its governor Lord Minto. The travelogue's author, Ahmad Rijaluddin, recounts his impressions on leaving the Malay world and journeying to the centre of the British Empire in Asia. As such the text represents perhaps the earliest autobiographical account of the impressions of a Malay[47] on leaving the Malay world and witnessing another culture and reality. This text also appears to provide the first instance of a Malay author expressing an understanding of Britain that connects all the way back to Europe, however incomplete and vague that understanding might be.

From a close reading of the Malay text, it seems that Ahmad is somewhat confused by the relationship between Europe, Britain and Bengal. The Bengal governor Lord Minto is variously described as *raja Benggala* and *raja Kalkata.* In addition several mentions are made of *Yang di Pertuan Yuropa* and *raja Inglan.* It seems clear from the text that *Yang di Pertuan Yuropa*, while literally meaning the ruler of Europe, refers to the British monarch. However, exactly who is meant by *raja Inglan* is far less clear. For it seems that on occasion *raja Inglan* pertains to the king of Britain, and that at other times the individual intended is actually the governor of Bengal. This confusion is worth exploring in some detail, as it seems to reveal some misunderstanding on the part of Ahmad himself regarding the power structure linking Britain and Bengal.

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[47] According to Skinner (1982), Ahmad was probably born in Kedah around 1770. He was the son of a Chulia who had become a prominent member of the Chulia mercantile community in Penang.

In the introduction to his edition and translation of the text, Skinner writes: 'Of the various historical characters Ahmad mentions, there are only two who feature on more than a page or two of the *hikayat*. These two are the (somewhat shadowy) figure of *raja Inglan* who appears on six pages of the manuscript – and *Raja Lord Minto* or *raja Benggala*, who features on no less than 29 of the *hikayat*'s 97 pages.' (Skinner, 1982: 3). Thus, in his introduction Skinner seems to suggest that *raja Inglan* is a different person to *raja Benggala* / Lord Minto. Indeed in appendix 3 of his edition, he equates *raja Inglan* with *Yang di Pertuan Yuropa*. However, this is in conflict with his actual translation of *raja Inglan* sometimes as 'an English nobleman' and 'the English governor' and sometimes as the 'king of England'. For example:

> **Maka zaman dahulu kalanya asal yang empunya negeri itu Nawab Seri Bedola. Maka beberapa lamanya di dalam perintah duli baginda Nawab itu maka dengan dikehendaki Allah subhanahu wa ta'ala maka negeri itu ditakluk oleh Raja Inglan. Maka beberpapa lamanya di dalam perintah Raja Inglan itu dan beberapa raja2 yang berganti. Maka zaman ini dengan titah duli Yang diPertuan Yuropa maka ditaruhnya seorang raja daripada bangsa Inglan maka namanya baginda Raja Lord Minto.** (Skinner, 1982: 26)

> In days gone by, the country belonged to the Nawab Seri Bedola but after he had ruled over the country for some time, God declared that it should be conquered by an English nobleman. It has been under English rule for some time now, governed by a succession of viceroys. At the present juncture the King of Europe has appointed as viceroy an Englishman called Lord Minto. (Skinner, 1982: 27)

> **Lepas daripada itu beberapa puluh dan ratusnya kapal yang disuruh oleh Raja Inglan pergi melihat hulunya.** (Skinner, 1982: 36)

> Subsequently the King of England sent tens, nay hundreds of ships to investigate the source of the river. (Skinner, 1982: 37)

Skinner is probably right in using different translations in different contexts. At times it seems certain that when writing *raja Inglan* Ahmad implies Minto, while on other occasions the meaning is far less clear. In the second of the two examples above for example, it is impossible to say whether Ahmad really meant the King of Britain, or whether he saw those orders as coming from Minto in Calcutta. The apparent confusion suffered by Ahmad is perhaps understandable considering the nature of the relationship between Calcutta and London, for the governor-general in Bengal was often making important decisions without the possibility of referring back to

London[48]. However in relation to the attack on Mauritius, Ahmad gives an elaborate description of the reception of a letter, with much pomp and ceremony, from the ruler of Europe (*Yang diPertuan Yuropa*) giving instructions for the attack.

In his travelogue, Ahmad Rijaluddin makes specific reference to Europe on a number of occasions, in addition to listing various nationalities. The first mention of Europe comes in the opening pages when Ahmad is describing the system of power in Bengal, as in the section quoted above. Clearly, Ahmad is portraying the British monarch as the ruler of Europe. It is possible that Ahmad was confused about the political realities in Europe, thinking that Britain was more or less synonymous with Europe. However this idea seems to be contrary to the evidence presented in the text, for elsewhere Ahmad lists various European nationalities or *bangsa*, including British, French, Portuguese, Dutch and Danish. Furthermore towards the end of the text the Dutch governor-general in Batavia is attributed as saying:

> **Sudahlah benua Yuropa kita dirampas oleh raja Ferangsih yang bernama Musa Bona Partu.** (Skinner, 1982: 150)
>
> The French ruler called Musa[49] Bonaparte has taken our European territory.

This extract obviously demonstrates Ahmad's understanding of the presence of rival powers in Europe other than the British. Indeed Ahmad also refers to the Dutch part of Europe being subjugated by the French (*sebab Yuropa Belanda sudah takluk kepada Ferangsih;* Skinner, 1982: 148).

Perhaps more likely is that Ahmad's understanding of the situation in Bengal led him to deduce that Britain was the most powerful of the European nations. Several of the cities he describes, including Chichuda, Serampore and Chandernagore, are noted by the author as having once been under the authority of different European

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[48] The meaning of the word *raja* should also be considered here, for as well as meaning king, it can also be used for administrators, princes and other members of a royal family (for full details see Wilkinson, 1932: part 2, 300-301).

[49] Presumably Musa corresponds to Monsieur.

powers but having all fallen into the hands of the British[50]. For example in the case of Serampore:

> **Maka adalah sebuah negeri Zanmark maka negeri itu bernama Serampur. Maka adalah negeri itu ditaruh oleh baginda seorang penghulu seperti raja kecil daripada bangsa Inglan memerintahkan negeri itu mengikut titah baginda Raja Lord Minto.** (Skinner, 1982: 92)
>
> There is a city belonging to Denmark, and that city is called Serampore. His Majesty has appointed a British man as a sort of deputy governor to administer the city in accordance with the orders of His Majesty Raja Lord Minto.

In Ahmad's eyes, Lord Minto was all-powerful in India and the Malay lands, and therefore the European ruler who had appointed him was the most powerful ruler in Europe and deserving of the title *Yang di Pertuan Yuropa.* This is conducive to the image that Ahmad was trying to create in his work, where he certainly sets out to portray the British rulers in an ideal way, befitting traditional Malay *hikayat*, with unrivalled power being one of the most important attributes.

Interestingly, when Ahmad recounts the fame of the government of Bengal and its ruler, he does not envisage that fame as stretching as far as Europe:

> **...beberapa zaman demikianlah perintahnya negeri Benggala itu termasyhurlah ke bawah angin dan di atas angin kedengaran warita sampai ke benua Rum dan Mesir dan negeri benua Cina ke Mekah Medinah.** (Skinner, 1982: 28)
>
> ...so for some time the government of the land of Bengal has been famous in the lands below and above the winds, the news reaching as far as Turkey and Egypt, China, Mecca and Medina.

Thus while Ahmad is aware of the existence of Europe, his imagination and understanding rarely stretches that far. Indeed his imagination of the world is very much in line with the traditional Malay world-view, which reaches from Turkey to China. When describing Britain as a fierce tiger *(harimau yang amat garang;* Skinner, 1982:142) he implies the behaviour and the attitude of the British in Asia, with their centre in Bengal. When he enthuses over the supremacy of Britain, it is

[50] Ahmad was writing at a time (1811), when, as a result of the Napoleonic wars, various European possessions had fallen temporarily into British hands. The vast majority of these possessions were returned to the different European powers within a few decades.

inevitably a paramountcy based not on London but on Calcutta. In the excerpt below, which occurs late in the text in the section explaining the bellicose intentions of Lord Minto, Ahmad does acknowledge the jealousy of Britain's European rivals, but these are jealousies concerning Asian territories:

> **Maka terlalulah ramainya negeri Kalkata itu seperti perempuan yang amat elok rupanya beberapa orang raja2 melihat rupanya gila birahi terlalulah [...] lakunya maka dengkilah Raja Feringsih dan Olanda dan Pertugal hendak diambil, tiada kuasa melawan berperang dengan Raja Inglan sebab kawal sambang jaga segala penghulu dan pahlawan Inglan terlalu amat keras. Maka dengan sebab itu jadi sentosalah negeri itu tiada berlawan dari atas angin sampai ke bawah angin zaman sekarang ini masyhurlah pada segala negeri tanah Hindustan. (Skinner, 1982: 140)**
>
> The city of Calcutta ia very busy place, like a beautiful woman; quite a few of the rajas who have seen its appearance have been captivated [...]. The rajas of France, Holland, and Portugal can't bear to see it; they want to take it, but they haven't the strength to fight against the raja of Britain, whose officers and soldiers guard and patrol the city so well. This is why the city is so secure – in the lands above the wind and the lands below the wind there is nothing to rival it – in this present age it is renowned throughout the length and breadth of India.

According to the image developed in *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala*, it is Lord Minto, not the nameless British monarch in Europe, who rules over Ahmad's native-land of Penang. Envoys are recorded as having been sent from Europe and the name of Bonaparte, as a great European ruler is listed. However this is all peripheral to Ahmad's vision of the world, which centres on Calcutta.

A similar vision, with British power centred on Bengal, is presented by the anonymous author of *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*. This text, written in 1815, just a few years after *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala,* gives an account of the British invasion of Java and the subsequent struggle against the French. Unlike Ahmad Rijaluddin's text, no mention is made of Europe in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi,* however British power is firmly centred outside of the Malay world, on Bengal. No allusion is made to the British monarch, and the attack on Java is seen as originating from Bengal, on the orders of the British Governor-General Lord Minto:

Angkatan perang dari Benggala	The fleet of ships came from Bengal
Lor Minto yang maharaja lela	Lord Minto the powerful ruler

Thus whenever reference is made to the British outside the Malay world, the imagination of the author turns to India:

Awal mulanya cerita Inggeris	So to begin the story of the British
Dari Benggala Bombai dan Huris	From Bengal, Bombay and Orissa
Dibawanya kapal sekaliannya habis	They brought their entire fleet
Datang ke Betawi memukul Perancis.	And came to Batavia to defeat the French.

However while Ahmad Rijaluddin attempts to link events further west with his mention of the *Yang Dipertuan Yuropa*, albeit resulting in a somewhat confused, and hazy picture, the author of *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*[51] makes no connection west of India[52]. Maybe that author too had a hazy understanding of the origins and ultimate source of British power, and simply decided to avoid the issue. Perhaps such linking to Europe was not considered necessary for the narrative, and rather it was enough to explain the arrival of the British from the famed India. Certainly, if we accept that the author's principal aim in writing this text was to demonstrate the benefits brought to Java by Raffles' rule (Murtagh: 2002), it serves the narrative well to present the paramount ruler, in the person of Minto, authorising the attack, and following on from his successful campaign in Java, personally bestowing authority and thus legitimacy on Raffles.

It should also be noted that in common with texts such as *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda*, the author of *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*, demonstrates his grasp of the complexities of the various European rivalries operating within the Malay world. On

[51] Contrast can be made with *Syair Inggeris Menyerang Kota*, a different poem describing the same events as *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*. In this poem the British are given no geographical background, 'The British waited for a long time Assembling their soldiers and chiefs It was reported that the British were already close by' (*Ingrislah doemdoem terlaloe lama / lagie mengoempoelkan soldadoe panglima ... kabarnja Ingris soedala dekat)*. It is as if they arrive mysteriously, from a place of no concern or of unknown origin. Suddenly they are nearby, waiting off the coast of Java, and it is only then that they enter into the imagination of the author.

[52] The author's vision does extend to Arabia in a particular quatrain in which he describes the increase in trade coming from that area once peace had been restored by the British: 'there was an increase in the number of boats from Arabia / the place where people go on the haj' (*tambahan kapal yang dari Arabi / tempt tuan-tuan naik haji*). With its links to the pilgrimage and Islam however, such a geographical reference is entirely in keeping with the traditional view of the world.

the one side there are the British (*Inggeris*), and on the other side there are the French (*Perancis* or *Prasman*) and Dutch (*Olanda*) forces.[53]

In *Cerita Siam,* Syeikh Abdullah gives a somewhat clearer picture of the British. In this text the British are mentioned in connection with various delegations that were sent to Siam. In these incidents it is clear that Syeikh Abdullah perfectly understands that the centre of power of the British in the region is in Bengal. Indeed he even tells us the name of the ruler there. Hastings is given the correct title of governor-general, and he is also correctly identified as a marquess[54];

> **Syahadan adalah tatkala datang suruhan Tuan Besar Gouverneur Generaal Marquess Hastings di Benggala itu menyuruhkan seorang besar Mister Crawfurd membawa surat serta bingkisan kepada raja Siam.** (Zaini-Lajoubert, 1987: 188)
>
> There came a time when the governor-general of Bengal, Marquess Hastings, ordered the chief, Mr Crawfurd, to bring a letter together with presents to the raja of Siam.

Syeikh Abdullah demonstrates his understanding of the various diplomatic overtures made by Britain towards Siam and of the British presence in Bengal, but as with many of his contemporaries, however, the author's vision and imagining does not extend beyond Bengal. No explanation for the origins of the British presence in Bengal is given[55]. Certainly it should be recognised that Syeikh Abdullah's *Cerita Siam*, although lacking dates, contains many historical facts and details with regard to the Siamese monarchy and also the relations of Siam with Burma and Laos. Clearly the author witnessed few of the events described, but has relied almost entirely on informants. As Zaini Lajoubert has argued (1987: 17), Syeikh Abdullah was an admirer of many aspects of European rule in the Malay world, and it is interesting to note his remarks on the importance of the European (British) presence in Penang as a spur for the development of the Siamese state:

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[53] It is important to note that the author finds no difficulty in differentiating between the French and the Dutch. It is recognised that while there were both French and Dutch troops in Batavia at this time, and while Janssen himself was of course a Dutchman, it was the French who were in power.

[54] Francis Rawdon-Hastings (1754-1826) was governor-general of Bengal 1813-1822. He was rewarded in 1817 for his services with the title Marquess of Hastings.

[55] A comparison can be made with Syeikh Abdullah's *Hikayat Mareskalek*, a text much more in the traditional genre of court chronicle, which is far less interested in the world outside the Malay world, and certainly when mentioning the British invasion of Java, no detail as to the geographical origins of the British fleet is given.

> **Adalah orang Siam itu seperti orang hutan, tiada biasa melihat harta dunia. Maka baru zaman di Pulau Penang jadi negeri, ada melihat dunia sedikit-sedikit di dalam negerinya dan didengarnya. Maka segala negeri yang tiada bangsawan kulit putih itu seperti orang bertelanjang tiada memakai pakaian atau seperti pohon kayu yang mati.** (Zaini-Lajoubert, 1987: 185)
>
> The people of Siam were like jungle dwellers, not used to seeing the wealth of the world. Only since the founding of Pulau Penang as a settlement, have they seen anything of the world in their land, and also heard something of it. All the countries that do not have white men as nobles, are like people who are naked not using clothes, or a tree which is dead.

Syeikh Abdullah, while quite aware of differences between British and Dutch, and having strong connections with the Dutch administration in the Dutch East Indies, nevertheless also, on occasions, sees the British presence as making a positive contribution to the region[56]. However, for the most part in Syeikh Abdullah's works, the contrast that the author seems to make is between *orang putih* (white man) and *orang hitam* (black man). He contrasts the positive system of rule introduced by the *orang putih*, with the uncivilised systems of the *orang hitam* living without the impact of the white men. Interestingly he compares the people of Siam and the people of Java as having lived in similar misfortune due to the absence of Western rule. Thus, not only does Syeikh Abdullah seem to perceive a similarity in the culture of *orang putih*, regardless of whether they are British or Dutch, but he also seems to develop the idea of an Eastern culture, characterised by a number of negative qualities.

Thus in these texts from the early nineteenth century a number of developments are evident. Most strikingly, the imagination of Malay authors is beginning to extend beyond the confines of the Malay world to take into account the British centre in Bengal. A recognition and understanding of the organisational structure linking British settlements to the Asian core in India is quite apparent. In addition, while the recognition of the different European rivalries continues to be a feature, there is a shift in the texts discussed immediately above, in that the growing

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[56] There is one particular incident in *Hikayat Mareskalek*, where the British are represented in a far from appreciative light, which has been quoted in Chapter Two. The taxation regime introduced by Raffles is compared very negatively against the benefits of Daendels's rule (Zaini-Lajoubert, 1987: 109).

dominance of Britain in the region and also in the wider world, which had begun in the late eighteenth century, is now reflected quite clearly in the Malay texts.

Britain in Europe

The last group of texts to be discussed in this chapter, all show evidence of a world-view that has developed considerably beyond the picture outlined so far. The obvious starting point for this section are the works of Abdullah Munsyi, and in particular his *Hikayat Abdullah.* The representation of Europe, Britain and the West, as revealed in the works of Abdullah, demonstrates a much clearer and more precise understanding of the working of the British empire, than has been seen in the works discussed so far.

Concerning the West, Abdullah, who met a large number of different Europeans and also Americans through his work as a teacher of Malay, was familiar with many of the Western nationalities. Coming from Melaka, Abdullah must have been particularly aware of the existence of different European nations, since the city had been ruled by Portuguese, Dutch and British. Indeed within Abdullah's own lifetime he experienced the hand over of Melaka from the British to the Dutch and back again which meant not just a changing of flags, but also a different language, and different administrative system. Recognising these national rivalries, Abdullah portrays the animosity between the two sides at the ceremony to mark the hand over of control to the Dutch:

> **Kulihat kelakuan kedua pihak mereka itu seperti orang hendak berbunuh2an, masing2 dengan marahnya serta merah padam warna muka mereka itu.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 168)
>
> I noticed the behaviour of the two sides was as if they wanted to kill each other, their faces being deep red with anger.

However, as he describes in his *hikayat*, his understanding of the make up of Europe, with its different states and peoples, was a process that developed gradually, and through personal experience.

Maka kataku: 'Tuan, dia orang apa?' Maka jawabnya 'Inggeris. Apa sebab Tuan tanya?' Maka kataku 'Sahaya kira bukannya Inggeris'. Maka katanya 'Bagaimana Tuan boleh tau?' Maka jawabku 'Sebab lidahnya kekenalan bukannya Inggeris'. Maka iapun tertawa, katanya 'Orang Melayu pun pandai kenal Inggeris daripada bangsa lain2'. Lalu katanya 'Betul, dia bukannya Inggeris, orang Jerman.' Maka heran aku menengar. Seumurku hidup, baharulah menengar ada bangsa bernama Jerman. Maka kataku: 'orang Serani[57], Tuan?' Maka katanya 'Bukan, sama juga orang Eropah, tetapi nama masing2 bangsa.' (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 129).

I asked: 'What sort of man is he, sir?' He (Milne) replied: 'British. Why do you ask?' I said: 'I don't believe he is British' and he asked: 'How do you know?' I replied: 'Because of his accent, one can tell that he isn't British.' Mr Milne laughed saying: 'The Malays are good at knowing the British from other races' and added: 'True, he is not British. He is German'. I was surprised to hear this for never in my life before had I heard of a race called the Germans. I asked: 'Eurasians, sir? Mr Milne answered 'No. They are also Europeans, but each race has its own name'. (cf. Hill, 1970: 110)

As is apparent from this conversation about Mr Thomsen, Abdullah had clearly been unfamiliar with Germans, but once explained, he was able to adapt the information into his existing understanding of Europe and its peoples.

In the knowledge that Abdullah had a fair, though still developing, understanding of various Western peoples, it is interesting to also consider his references to Europe and Britain. The event with which Europe is most commonly linked in his text concerns the returning of individuals[58] to Europe (*pulang ke Eropah*)[59]. It should be observed that Abdullah rarely describes individuals as returning to Britain (*Inggeris* or occasionally *England*), normally preferring Europe[60] and that none of the individuals who are described as returning to Europe are recorded as coming back to the Malay world[61].

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[57] As Hill points out, Abdullah uses the term *nasrani* or *serani* to refer to Roman Catholics of mixed descent (1970: 104).

[58] For example, the returns of Thomsen (156); Raffles (247, 252); Farquhar (254); the famous doctor (267); Paderi Humphreys (310); Crawfurd (310); Smith (317); Paderi Kidd (Datoek Besar and Roolvink transcribe as *tuan kita*, but it appears that Tuan Kidd, as appears in the Pustaka Antara edition (1997) is the correct reading).

[59] Russell Jones has informed the current author that in the later colonial service individuals were not allowed to spend leave in the tropics, except to recuperate from the heat. Thus the employee was generally obliged to take leave in Europe.

[60] The only individual portrayed as returning to Britain is Methuen: *Maka sedikit hari itu pun pulanglah ke England* (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 197).

[61] Abdullah reports that Thomsen intends to return to Europe, (*Maka Tuan Thomsen hendak pulang ke Eropah sebab hendak membawa pulang isterinya itu)* but he never actually made it as his wife died on the voyage, and so Thomsen returned to Melaka (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 156).

Concerning the arrival of persons into the world described in his *hikayat*, Abdullah tends to simply use a variation on the phrase *Maka datanglah tuan (...) ke Melaka/Singapura*, rarely telling us from where they have come. Interestingly, Abdullah hardly ever uses *Eropah,* or *Inggeris / England,* to describe the place from which individuals come to the Malay world[62]. Raffles is described as coming to the Malay world from Bengal (*Tuan Raffles pun datanglah dari Benggala*). On one occasion it seems Abdullah is either unsure whether some particular individuals had arrived directly from Britain or from Bengal and it might also be understood from Abdullah's narrative that he was not particularly concerned about the detail of place of departure, for his main intention in introducing the officers is to describe the cruel and oppressive behaviour of Mr Bean when in Melaka.

> **Maka datanglah dua orang2 besar dari England atau Benggala, iaitu menjadi kepala Supai orang Benggala dalam Melaka.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 68)
>
> Two senior officers came from Britain or Bengal to take charge of the Indian troops in Melaka.

Despite being a *hikayat* in which the British and other Europeans feature a great deal, it can be observed that it is generally only Europeans and British actually in the Malay world, that are described. Rarely are we told anything of the reputation of a personage before he arrives. Similarly we are told nothing of individuals once they have left the Malay world, with the slight exception of when Abdullah recorded his feelings on hearing of the sinking of Raffles' ship, soon after setting off from Bengkulu. When Abdullah reports that someone is returning to Europe, it seems to serve merely as a formula to indicate that a particular character is departing from the narrative. It is also worth considering that this phrase of returning to Europe (*pulang ke Eropah*) may well reflect the word-combination used by the British personalities themselves to suggest that they were not just going to India, the centre of the empire in Asia, but that their voyage was actually to Britain itself.

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[62] The one exception being when Abdullah relates how he was called to Melaka by Mr Hughes, who had recently arrived from Britain.

The other situation in which reference to Europe frequently occurs, is in connection with knowledge and skill, and also, related to this, material goods which had never been seen before in the Malay world. For example:

> **Maka ia itulah membawa suatu jenis pekerjaan yang diperbuat oleh orang pandai dari Eropah.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 143).
>
> He [Mr Slater] had brought with him a type of machine made by European specialists.

Thus in *Hikayat Abdullah*, the author makes an association between Europe and new technology as well as knowledge and innovation. Abdullah delights in the inventions and new goods arriving from Britain and Europe, and particularly in the attitude to learning and scholarship that he associates with the British and Europeans. He notes, for example, that the bones from a captured elephant were sent to Britain to be examined (Datoek Besar dan Roolvink, 1953: 65). However, in general Abdullah only tells us about the British inventions and achievements which impact on the Malay world. He had undoubtedly heard about numerous novelties and inventions that existed in Britain, but he does not dwell on them in *Hikayat Abdullah*. The one occasion when he mentions the existence of technological advances in Europe, is when explaining the scepticism of his fellow Malays and their unwillingness to believe in things they had not seen with their own eyes. Thus he highlights his perception of his fellow Malays as unable to imagine beyond their immediate cultural environment.

> **Maka sungguhpun demikian aku khabarkanlah kepada kawan2ku dari hal kepandaian dan hikmat orang putih dari pada barang perkara yang kulihat dan yang kudengar dari pada tuan2 Inggeris yang baik2, sehingga tersebutlah darihal kapal asap itu. Maka marahlah mereka itu dan berbantah-bantah ia membohongkan aku dan berkata, 'Engkau selalu membesarkan nama Inggeris, yang tidak-tidak pun engkau khabarkan.'** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 312).
>
> In spite of this, I told my friends about the skill and invention of white men, the things that I had seen and heard about from good British men, until I reached the subject of steamships. They became angry and argued against me, accusing me of lying and saying: 'You always inflate the name of the British, telling about things which do not exist'. (cf. Hill: 1970: 234)

When Abdullah's son, Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi wrote his travelogue recounting five voyages taken to various places on the Malay Peninsula in the 1860's and 1870's, the position of the British was already well entrenched in the region. Although the author was in the employment and service of the Johor sultan, he was clearly familiar with British administrative systems. As Sweeney and Phillips have argued, this text is one that no longer sees the author's country as being at the centre of the universe (1975; xxvii). Not only is the author completely at ease in describing the various systems of power in the peninsula, both indigenous and British, but so too he projects himself as being equally at ease with both Malay rulers and British officials. The British presence does not need to be explained in this text, for it is already well established.

The author owes his loyalty to the sultan of Johor, but it is clear from the travelogues that among the other rulers in the Malay world, Ibrahim views the British as the most important and most powerful. Despite his allegiance to Johor, Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi does not doubt the superiority of the British as witnessed through the settlements of Melaka, Singapore and Penang.

Like his father, while mainly acquainted with British individuals, Ibrahim, differentiates between different European nationalities, and is also very much aware of the different European rivalries. While earlier writers seem not to have been able or willing to look beyond the Malay world, to the origins and centre of British power, Ibrahim is in no doubt as to the organisation and structure of the British empire with its centre in London, and Queen Victoria at its head. This is clear from the dealings he had with British bureaucracy and legal papers, for example the certificates concerning land ownership that he translated for Mr Birch, as described in his third voyage. The impact of the British presence, and the sense of division created, between British territories and non-British territories, is also clearly understood by Ibrahim. This division is elaborated upon in the third voyage, in the retelling of an occasion when Ibrahim wished to buy gunpowder in Melaka:

> **'Saya [Captain Shaw] tidak boleh kasi pas kalau hobat[63] bedil keluar dari dalam Melaka. Melainkan daripada kepala yang menjaga tempat menyimpan hobat2 bedil di kota Linggi tetapi katanya kalau mahu kirim ke Padang perintah maharaja ta' usah saya kasi surat kerana bukan perintah Inggeris'.** (Muhammad Ibrahim, 1956: 22)
>
> 'I [Captain Shaw] cannot give you a permit if the gunpowder is to be taken out of Melaka. It must come from the man in charge of the gunpowder store at Linggi. However if you wish to send it to Padang, which is ruled by the maharaja, there is no need for me to give a permit, because it is not under British rule.'

Similarly when discussing the street names in Klang, Ibrahim differentiates between British and Malay territory.

> **Maka aku bertanya pula dan berkata: 'Sayang sekali. Apa sebab Kelang ini, negeri Melayu, dinamakan jalan2 dan pekerjaannya semuanya mengikut nama Inggeris? Jika dibubuh nama cara Melayu alangkah bagusnya.' Jawabnya: 'Bagus nama cara Inggeris tiada mengapa sama juga.' Maka pikiranku mengatakan dari sebab mereka itu biasa dalam Pulau Pinang itulah diikutnya demikian dengan tiada berpikir lagi itu membezakan antara perintah Inggeris dengan perintah Melayu.** (Muhammad Ibrahim, 1956: 45)
>
> I asked more questions and said: 'It is very sad. Why is it that here in Klang, a Malay state, the streets and institutions have been named in accordance with English usage? If Malay names were used it would be truly excellent.' He replied, 'English names are fine, it makes no difference.' I thought to myself that their familiarity with life in Penang had led them to follow it, without further thinking to differentiate between British and Malay government.

Perhaps more interesting than Ibrahim's differentiation between British and Malay government, is his perception of a blurring of this difference on behalf of the ruler of Klang. There is a clear recognition here of the influence that Britain was having beyond its official jurisdiction, and certainly in this case, it was a cause of regret for the author.

Also worthy of mention is an interesting passage where the Maharaja of Johor gives his men, including Muhamed Ibrahim Munsyi, a badge to signify their allegiance, particularly when outside of Johor. Ibrahim reports that the badges were of European manufacture, with two British flower motifs included in the embroidered design. In addition they were given six buttons, which Ibrahim stresses as being made in Britain, to be worn on their jackets and caps. Not only is it worth noting that the

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[63] h-u b-t, more commonly ubat or obat.

Johor sultanate used items of European manufacture as emblems of state, but also one cannot help but note the value that Ibrahim places on these items because of their European origin.

Many points discussed so far in this section are also evident in a poem written in Terengganu in 1928, *Syair Tuan Hampris*. The female author of this *syair* presents an interesting understanding of Britain and Europe. The terms *British*, *Inggeris*, *Eropah* and *London* are all used, but each has a specific function. Interestingly the word *Inggeris* is only used in connection with the language spoken by the protagonist of the *syair*, J.L.Humphreys. The term British is used several times but always together with an official colonial rank, such as *agen* or *adbiser*. When describing Humphreys' trips back to his homeland and his reputation among his own people, terms for England or Britain are never used, but rather we get the terms Europe[64] or London[65]. Humphreys is described as having a good reputation in Europe, and as travelling back to Europe on leave. He is never portrayed as travelling back to *Inggeris*. However a significant number of mentions are made of London, often indeed describing it as a *negeri* or *negara*[66]. The king is placed not in Britain but in London, as are his ministers. Thus in contrast to earlier Malay texts discussed in this chapter, we see a clear recognition of the direct links between the Malay states and the government back in London, not in Bengal. It may well be that the mention of London reflects the way of talking of the British, referring to news from London and instructions from London rather than from Britain. The mention of Europe on the other hand might serve to emphasise a perceived importance of Britain, or it may simply refer to a differentiation between the colonial centre in Asia, and the centre and the origins of the colonists in Europe.

When describing the changes made in Terengganu during Humphreys' period of power, the author uses the voice of the common people to show the attitude of the general populous towards one of the changes that he instigated. Clearly in the

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[64] See verses 8, 9, 16, 70.

[65] See verses 172, 176, 194, 201-104.

[66] The terms *negeri/negara* are somewhat complex in their usage. However it is useful to note that traditionally the name of the main settlement or city would also serve as the name of the state. In this manner it is quite reasonable to refer to *negeri* London.

following extract, the British are understood not in terms of a particular nationality, but simply as white men:

Pada masa jalan dibuatnya besar	When the road was to be widened
Datanglah notis pegawai bandar	There came a notice from officials in the city
Rumah yang terkena ke jalan besar	Houses obstructing the way of the highway
Hendaklah segera pindah beredar.	Should be moved away immediately.
Manakala mendengar notisnya itu	Wherever this notice was heard
Banyaklah orang berhati mutu	Many people despaired
Mulut berkata tiadalah tentu	They said full of hesitation
'Inilah akal orang putih itu'.	'These are the underhand tricks of the white men'.

It is clear from the biographical details that we know of the author and her husband, she would undoubtedly have been well aware of the political situation in Europe, certainly at least with regard to the existence of different nation states. However such an understanding might have been less clear for the wider Malay population, the probable postulated audience, for whom there would have been less need to distinguish between the various European powers. Certainly the use of the term *orang putih* in this context create a strong impression of the British as 'other',

Finally, this section includes a very particular group of texts, namely those that glorify the jubilees of British monarchs. For obvious reasons these texts reveal a clear link back to Britain as well as an emphasis on the relationship between the Malay world and the British metropole.

In *Syair Kuin 50 Tahun jubili*, which in large part extols the virtues of Queen Victoria, the heroic queen, with her British race/nationality (*Kuin itu raja perempuan/bangsa Inggeris amat pahlawan*) is the ruler not just over the Malay world, but a great number of states:

Selama kuin menjadi raja	While ruling as queen
Banyaklah negeri bagai dijaja	Many states have been colonised
Kepada kuin diserahkan sahaja	They have surrendered to the queen
Hendak mengikut adat yang manja.	Wanting to follow the dearly loved traditions.

(Murtagh, 2003: 37)

The understanding of the different European states is also perfectly evident, with reference to the different periods of occupation under Portuguese, Dutch and British, with particular characteristics assigned to each of those rules. Finally in the closing cheers, Queen Victoria is placed firmly in Britain, and in London, her capital.

Selamat 2 Kuin Wiktoria	
Selamat2 raja di Ingglan	**Hip2 hurai3**
Selamat2 Permaisuri di Londan.	
Long live Queen Victoria	Hip hip hooray
Long live the ruler in Britain	Hip hip hooray
Long live the queen in London.	Hip hip hooray

(Murtagh, 2003: 42)

Just as in *Syair Kuin 50 tahun jubili,* the anonymous Poem on Queen Victoria's Jubilee connects the Malay states back to Britain and London. Also in this poem, we see that the relationship with London is set into a wider context, for in this *syair*, other imperial domains are mentioned, in this case specifically the Indian states:

Tanah Hindi diperintahnya	The land of India is ruled over by her
Sekalian raja2 tunduk kepadanya.	All the rajas bow their heads to her[67].

(Murtagh, 2003: 34)

Thus in this last group of texts, we see a world view presented by a variety of Malay authors, that not only shows an unambiguous understanding of the political reality, but a vision of the world that stretches as far as Europe. There is not just a recognition that Europe exists, but also an active effort to include Europe within the narratives, whether that be in the journey of *Tuan Hampris* back to the metropole, the sending of elephant bones to London for examination in *Hikayat Abdullah,* or the jubilee congratulations sent to Queen Victoria in Britain.

[67] As a form of comparison with the above two texts it is interesting to look at *Shaer intan Jubilee* written by the European, de Vries. In his poem the references to Britain and the wider empire are much more developed. Not only is there reference to Windsor castle and Britain, England and London, but there is also the somewhat laboured reference to the Australian state of Victoria in the line *di New South Wales nama daerahnya* (de Vries, 1897: 2). While the *syair* centres on the organisation of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Singapore, a much wider view of the world is nonetheless reflected in this poem. For example, the changed relationship with Holland is mentioned in the following lines, which serve to place Singapore in the colonial context of the Malay world and Southeast Asia, 'A large Dutch war ship / By the name of Koningen Wilhelmina / Brought a letter from their governor / Greetings for the Queen's jubilee were given' *(Kapal perang besar Hollanda punya / Koningen Wilhelmina itu namanya / Membawak Surat dari governor-nya / Queen jubilee Slamat di-Bri-nya).*

Conclusion

By the mid-nineteenth century Malay authors no longer imagined a world that fitted in with the boundaries of the traditional view held at the time of the first European voyages to the region. Rather than a view that was bordered by Turkey to the west and by China to the east, the imagining of the world had changed radically, to include Europe generally and Britain in particular. At the same time, by examining Malay literary texts from *Hikayat Aceh*, dating from the early seventeenth century, up to *Syair Tuan Hampris* written at the beginning of the twentieth century, we can see how the representation of the British gradually changed from a group among many, and certainly of far less significance than the Portuguese or the Dutch, to a politically dominant power.

The vision of the world broadened and developed to absorb the new reality that the British colonial presence implied. Certainly, different genres reflected this process in different ways. Traditional style court literature maintained a more introspective nature, rarely looking beyond the immediate borders of the sultanate, though at the same time unable to deny the presence of an increasingly influential alternative power acting on the periphery. Finally, as we see in *Hikayat Pahang,* this alternative power, operating now at the very centre of the court, could no longer be avoided. Other genres were able to respond more dynamically, and it is surely no coincidence that these new genres such as biography and travelogue came about at a time when Malay writers were having to deal with and to portray this new and extended picture of the world.

Thus while all genres did not respond uniformly, a general pattern of development is nonetheless clear. After initial and confused beginnings, Malay authors first recognised the organisation of the British as a political unit working within the Malay world, in much the same way, perhaps, as other rival indigenous powers. The linking of the British to the imperial centre in Bengal is very much in line with the organisation of British trade and empire in the early to mid nineteenth century, when the Malay centres were ruled not directly from London, but rather from the seat of the governor-general in Bengal. However, it must be remembered that the

recognition of a power operating from India required no great leap in the understanding or imagination of the Malay author. As has been discussed briefly in the introduction to this chapter, and as is well known from a diverse range of traditional Malay texts, India had long been integral to the Malay understanding of the world. Thus the British presence in Bengal was merely being assimilated into an already existing picture of the world. The real shift that occurs is the acknowledgement of a world beyond the Middle East, the adaptation of the existing body of knowledge to incorporate Europe and the colonial metropole into the geographical understanding of the world. The blank space on the map was filled in. This process of adaptation or reassessment of existing knowledge created a literature in which knowledge of the metropole was incorporated. To integrate that knowledge into a literature, which if no longer strictly traditional, still bore many traditional traits, required significant imagination and openness on the part of the Malay author and undoubtedly that new knowledge was a spur to the development of new genres, or the transformation of more traditional genres. While other factors must certainly be taken into consideration of what might be called the transition from traditional literature to modern literature, a significant element in this development must be seen as the change in the understanding of the world that was caused by the colonial encounter.

CHAPTER FOUR

BRITAIN, JUSTICE AND LAW

Ideas of justice and application of law are recurrent themes in many of the texts that form the basis of study for this thesis. As many of the texts were either written during or refer to periods when the British were in power, there are numerous references pertaining to the nature of justice under the British. In several instances there are positive portrayals of the British system of law making and dispensation of justice. Malay authors often cite examples of British intervention in a specific case, to correct a wrongdoing or to prevent some sort of activity or behaviour that was judged to be improper or 'uncivilised'. Some writers, in particular Munsyi Abdullah, make systematic comparisons of British-controlled areas with states still under Malay rule. Other authors comment on aspects of justice in a less comparative sense, simply relating certain events that occurred under British rule. As most of these texts tend to originate from centres under British control, it is perhaps predictable that the majority of texts paint a relatively positive image of justice and law making under the colonising power. Nonetheless, the picture presented is not a wholly positive one. In particular, the two texts *Syair dagang berjual beli* and *Syair potong gaji* articulate a critical view.

Traditional Malay ideals of justice and law

In order to contextualise this chapter, it is necessary to first consider traditional Malay understandings of justice and application of law. The concept of justice is central to traditional Malay ideals of kingship. A key function of many

Malay genealogies and histories, together with 'mirrors for kings', is to reveal, explain and legitimise the obligations of the ruler with respect to justice, as well as the nature of the relationship between ruler and ruled. Thus, drawing on extracts from a number of key texts, the first section of this chapter will highlight characteristics and qualities of justice and the law according to traditional Malay literary texts. In particular the discussion will focus on extracts from three texts; *Sejarah Melayu, Tajus salatin*[1] and *Undang-undang Melaka*[2]. *Sejarah Melayu* presents essentially a Malay[3] idea of state ethics, with justice as its focus. *Tajus salatin* presents a well-founded and elaborate doctrine of state ethics, again with justice as its focus. The basis of the text is clearly Islamic, and in contrast with *Sejarah Melayu*, contains almost nothing that is specifically Malay. *Undang-undang Melaka* is a kind of legal textbook. It gives practical instruction for how ideas of justice should be realised and represents something of a synthesis of Islamic and indigenous ideas.

Indigenous ideas of justice and law

Central to traditional Malay concepts of justice is the nature of the relationship between ruler and realm, and in particular the expectation of the people regarding justice. The nature of the relationship is formulated clearly in a key section of *Sejarah Melayu* (Winstedt, 1938b: 57) in which the ruler Sri Tri Buana asks Demang Lebar Daun for his daughter's hand in marriage. Demang Lebar Daun only agrees to the marriage if the ruler consents to a contract[4]. On behalf of his people, he submits to Sri Tri Buana, on condition that even if they do wrong they should never be disgraced or

[1] *Tajus salatin* was composed by Bukhari al-Jauhari in 1603/4 and dedicated to the Acehnese Sultan Alauddin Riayat Syah. Bukhari claims in his text that he makes use of more than fifty Persian and Arabic sources, some of which have been identified and definitely exist. However, Braginsky (2005: 432) has recently discovered that approximately two thirds of *Tajus salatin* was sourced in the form of a translation/adaptation from one particular Persian work, *Nasihat al-muluk* (the 'Counsel to kings') written by Al-Ghazali, between 1109-1111. For a discussion of Bukhari al-Jauhari's origins, and where this text might have been written, see Braginsky (2000: 187-190). Roorda van Eysinga (1827) prepared an edition in typed Jawi, together with a Dutch translation. Two editions of this text in romanised script have been published (Jusuf, 1979 and Khalid Hussain, 1966).

[2] *Undang-undang Melaka* has been edited and translated into English by Liaw Yock Fang (1976). For dating of the various parts of the hybrid text see Liaw (1976: 38).

[3] The genealogical texts or chronicles can be seen as perhaps the most Malay of all the written genres. Clearly there are Islamic and pre-Islamic influences in *Sejarah Melayu*, yet it is generally recognised as a text of indigenous origin.

[4] This contract has been discussed in depth by De Josselin de Jong (1964).

reviled with evil words. This is agreed to by the ruler, on the condition that his subjects should never be disloyal, even if their ruler oppresses them. It was agreed that should a subject renege on the contract, his house would be destroyed, such that its roof be pushed downwards and its pillars turned upwards. Should the ruler put any of his Malay subjects to shame, this would be a sign that his kingdom will be destroyed by Almighty God. This sacred contract between ruler and realm permeates many traditional Malay texts, particularly those in the genealogical / historical genres. It is a concept that was certainly still known and understood by Malays in the nineteenth century, as is shown by Abdullah's account of a conversation between Raffles and the Malay sultan in Singapore, which is discussed later in this chapter.

The contract set out in *Sejarah Melayu* is not without problems, indeed it raises a fundamental dilemma. On the one hand, the people, including the most senior ministers and advisers, are obliged to be loyal to their ruler. At the same time the ruler is obliged to treat his subjects well and never to abuse or shame them. The problem comes if the ruler breaks his side of the contract and behaves in an oppressive way, for there is no get-out clause for the people. The only choice is to wait for God's intervention, which will result in the downfall of the sultan and his kingdom. De Josselin de Jong (1964: 239) notes that according to the basic ideology revealed in the contract[5] 'within the realm there is no force able or entitled to curb a ruler's excesses', thus any action has to come from outside. Hence the attack on Singapore by the Javanese following the disgrace of the daughter of Sang Ranjuna Tapa, and the capture of Melaka by the Portuguese following Sultan Mahmud's assassination of the Bendahara. However, as Reid has argued, the explanation for the fall of the sultanate is sought from within. There was no question of ascribing the fall of Melaka to the superior power of the Portuguese. Rather as a result of Sultan Mahmud's failure to adhere to the state's ethics, it was 'heaven's will' that brought about the fall (Reid, 1999: 248). Thus the structure of *Sejarah Melayu* does not serve simply as a court chronicle (De Josselin de Jong, 1964; Braginsky, 2005: 193-4), but in addition, the complex interweaving of various stories serve as practical examples and illustrations

[5] The similarity with the political ethic of *Hikayat raja Pasai* is also noted by, though in the earlier text, there is no formal contract, only the 'crude mechanism of submission and revenge' (De Josselin de Jong, 1964: 239).

of the political ethics of the state, those ethics having been previously revealed through more theoretical, abstract exhortations.

In addition to the theoretical concepts contained in the contract, the death-bed exhortations of the various rulers further supplement these ideas of state ethics and in particular justice. The final words of Sultan Alauddin to his son Raja Mamat are recorded in some detail (Winstedt, 1938b: 149-150). The sultan reminds his son to always serve God and to desist from taking other men's property unlawfully. Subjects in distress should be assisted swiftly and victims of injustice should be helped by diligent inquiry. With the reminder that God will question all rulers as to how they have tended their subjects, Sultan Alauddin implores his son to always be just and to carry out diligent inquiry. He reminds his son of the importance of consultation with ministers and chiefs. Finally, with the words of the contract reverberating, he implores his son not to be hasty in putting his Malay subjects to death, for if a subject should be put to death when he has done no wrong, then the kingdom will perish (*kerajaanmu binasa*).

These last orders of Sultan Alauddin resonate throughout the chapters of *Sejarah Melayu,* which tell of Melaka during the reign of Sultan Mahmud Syah[6] and culminate in the defeat by the Portuguese. Woven throughout the text are examples of transgressions by Sultan Mahmud Syah, including the groundless execution of the dignitary Sri Bija Diraja, attempts to take other men's wives and the maltreatment of vassals. The recurring theme of the sultan's amorous intentions toward other men's women finally unfolds in the story of Tun Fatima, resulting in the execution of the *bendahara* and his family. To the end the *bendahara* sticks to the primordial contract and refuses to offer resistance to the executioners sent by the sultan. The only solution for such abusive behaviour by the sultan has to come from an outside agency, hence, despite Sultan Mahmud Syah's abdication in favour of his son, Melaka falls.

Another tale depicting justice and due punishment in *Sejarah Melayu* is that of Sultan Alauddin and the thieves. Having heard that crime had become rampant in the city, one night Alauddin and two of his men disguised themselves as thieves and went

[6] On becoming sultan of Melaka, Raja Mamat took the name Sultan Mahmud Syah.

out to see what was going on. On apprehending a group of thieves, Alauddin killed two of them, slashing one in half. After due investigations, the chest of money stolen by the gang was returned to the rightful owner, and the Sri Maharaja, responsible for security in the city, was admonished for his failure to maintain order (Winstedt, 1938b: 139-140). This story demonstrates the importance of maintaining order in the city and the need for sultans to remain personally aware of the situation of their people and, if necessary to take direct action to maintain order.

Islamic influences from the Middle East

In *Sejarah Melayu,* the omnipresent power of Allah is referred to in all the key expositions on justice and good rule. Thus, Sultan Alauddin warns his son that rulers will be judged by God, and the price for transgression is destruction of the kingdom. The links between the Islamic religion and traditional concepts of law and justice in Malay society have been discussed extensively by Jelani Harun (2003). Based on three texts, *Nasihat al-muluk*[7], *Tajus salatin*, and *Bustanus salatin,* Jelani (2003, 121-159) has demonstrated the familiarity of writers in the Malay world, with ideas from Persia and the wider Islamic world, and the clear links in ideas of kingship and governance. In particular, Jelani has highlighted the connection between Islamic thought and the advice for rulers, to be found in various works falling into the genre of 'mirrors for kings' from across the Islamic world. Jelani argues that, according to Islamic ideas, the concept of the 'just ruler' is central, encompassing qualities such as piety, generosity, bravery, honesty, leadership, loyalty, patience, respect, simple living, humility, trustworthiness, diligence and sincerity (Jelani, 2003: 124).

Perhaps the most important of the 'mirrors for kings' that was written in, or brought to, the Malay world was the *Tajus salatin*[8]. Braginsky has analysed the extent

[7] *Nasihat al-muluk* was written by Imam al-Ghazali in Persian between 1105-1111. A Malay translation of this text is contained in a manuscript held at the University of Edinburgh (Dc.6. 73-74), which dates from around 1700 (for more detail on this text and its Malay translation see Jelani, 2003: 38-42). Al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-muluk* should not be confused with another Malay text of similar name, *Kitab Nasihat al-muluk*, contained in a Cambridge University manuscript (MS Gg.6.40), dating from 1604 (Jelani, 2003: 34-38).

[8] The influence of this text is demonstrated by the fact that excerpts and stories from *Tajus salatin* are to be found in various Malay literary texts including *Hikayat Bakhtiar*, *Hikayat Isma Yatim* and *Salasilah Kutai*. The text was also translated into Javanese (Braginsky, 2000: 189-90). Munsyi Abdullah urges Malay rulers to read *Tajus salatin* in his *Kisah Pelayaran Abdullah* (Kassim Ahmad,

to which justice is the notion central to the whole work[9]. He argues that the Sufi nature of the first section of *Tajus salatin* demonstrates that the notion of justice had an ontological meaning as well as an ethical one (2000: 197). While the first section of the work (introduction and chapters 1-4), provides the Islamic basis for the model of justice put forward, and the fourth section (chapters 14-24) considers a variety of themes including generosity and reason, it is within the second (chapters 5-9) and third (chapters 10-13) sections that the most useful material for developing our understanding of Malay concepts of justice is to be found. The second section concerns the responsibilities of rulers, while the third section focuses on the functions and duties of ministers and advisers.

In the second section, the topics covered encompass the dignity of the ruler, just and unjust deeds of kings, the character of the just ruler, just non-Muslim rulers, and the concept of tyranny and the deeds of tyrants. Throughout this section comes the reminder to rulers that they will be judged by Allah in the next world. Thus it is stated that if 'a ruler is just in this world, after the day of judgement he shall reside in heaven on a pearl throne' (*raja yang adil dalam dunia pada hari kiamat duduk di atas mimbar yang daripada mutiara;* Khalid Hussain, 1966: 68). This advice is repeated in the ninth chapter on unjust rulers, together with examples of the displeasure Allah shows towards unjust behaviour. Examples of Allah's displeasure include the swallowing up by black boiling water of the palace of the cruel and oppressive ruler of Basrah, the destruction of the king's pleasure-dome in Isfahan, and the kicking to death of the tyrant Yazdakird by an angel disguised as a horse (Khalid Hussain, 1966: 110-117). The consequences for the unjust ruler are further stressed in the chapter on tyranny and oppression. With its various examples of tyrannical behaviour, Bukhari stresses that tyranny will not only lead to calamity in this world but, most importantly, tyrants will be banned by Allah from heaven. As in *Sejarah Melayu*, we see that the punishment for the ruler who fails in his duties will come in the next world.

1981: 73). The work survives in about 20 manuscripts (Mulyadi, 1983: 293), indicating its wide circulation.

[9] For a list of chapters of *Tajus salatin*, see Braginsky (2000: 198). For a synopsis of the text see Winstedt (1991: 204-209).

Most important for our consideration of the understanding of attitudes to British rulers, the chapter on non-Muslim rulers recognises that despite being non-believers, such rulers can still be just, and indeed exemplary. The example is given of the ruler Nashruwan (Persian, Anushirwan), a very good, honest and just non-Muslim ruler (Khalid, 1966: 101). We are also told of the Chinese ruler who was struck deaf following an illness. He was deeply disturbed by his deafness, because it prevented him from hearing the complaints of his subjects. Again, the ruler is obliged to listen to his people. This is the key feature that will ensure the ruler who is endowed with the right qualities will stay on track and maintain his obligation towards all his subjects.

Concerning the relationship between ruler and ministers, Bukhari (Khalid Hussain, 1966: 73) draws on particular factors that would lead to the destruction or downfall of a kingdom. Bukhari warns of the dangers of information being withheld from the ruler, which will certainly lead to the destruction of the country. The ruler should also guard against giving power to officials who are bad and lacking in nobility, for those wrongly promoted to high rank will not respect those truly deserving of such status. Related to this is the problem of the people's hatred of high officials should they be oppressed. Bukhari further explains that oppressive actions by officials will cause the people to be less productive in planting crops and rice, and reluctant to engage in trade. The result of this will be less wealth for the ruler and a shortage of money in the royal treasury. The ensuing lack of food will lead to a weakened army, which itself will reduce the status and magnificence of the ruler.

There is a repeated stress on the importance of the ruler making sound judgements on the basis of the advice he receives from his ministers. In the chapter on justice and just deeds (chapter 6), there is a comprehensive description of the responsibilities, not only of the ruler, but also of his subjects[10]. Those chapters (10-13) primarily intended for officials and ministers, generally stress the importance of the king taking advice from his officials. However, one of its stories reminds the courtier that if he is too weak to prevent his ruler from cruelty and arbitrariness, then,

[10] The ears of all the people are the ears of the ruler (*telinga segala orang itulah telinga raja*), and thus it is the responsibility of the ruler's people to keep him informed of developments in his country. Likewise, it is important for the ruler's ears to be open to the knowledge and information made available to him.

like his ruler, he will be condemned, come the end of the world. Nonetheless, using the metaphor of the clean spring pouring into a dirty river, in preference to a dirty spring pouring into a clean river, the pre-eminence of the role and function of the ruler is stated.

A fusion of indigenous and Middle Eastern concepts

In addition to the genealogical works and the 'mirrors for kings', the third main group of texts which deepen our understanding of justice and law in traditional Malay society is legal texts[11]. While there are numerous legal digests from Peninsular Malaysia and beyond[12], this discussion will focus on *Undang-undang Melaka,* which is arguably the most important of the legal texts[13].

While the *Tajus salatin* gives many theoretical explanations of the role of the ruler and the concept of justice, albeit exemplified with numerous historical examples of both good and bad practice, the *Undang-undang Melaka* is much more of a practical document, at least in its intention. In general, the text is made up of a large number of laws, together with details of appropriate punishments should those laws be broken. However there are also more conceptual pieces, such as those sections outlining the role and function of the ideal ruler. The synthetic nature of Malay law is evident, for while *adat* is important in the justice system, Islam, with its own legal codes, clearly begins to penetrate the collection of laws. Liaw (1976: 31) argues that while customary law prevails in *Undang-undang Melaka*, the importance of Islamic law is apparent, through the tendency to note any divergence from Islamic law in the

[11] Winstedt divided Malay legal texts into three groups. The first group is made up of digests and tribal sayings which embody the 'mild indigenous matriarchal law of agricultural clans', known as *adat perpateh,* and come from Minangkabau and Negeri Sembilan. The second group, the *adat temenggong,* comprises digests of patriarchal law deterrent to criminals, which Winstedt sees as having evolved for the mixed populations of ports and having their origins in India; the third group comprises Malay translations of orthodox Muslim texts, particularly treatises on laws concerned with marriage, divorce and legitimacy of children (Winstedt, 1945: 17). This classification of legal texts and digests is reaffirmed by Liaw (1976: 1).

[12] While some other Malay legal digests such as *Undang-undang Kedah* and *Undang-undang Johor* have actually proven to be versions of *Undang-undang Melaka,* others, such as *Undang-undang Negeri, Undang-undang Pahang* and *Undang-undang Melayu* 'show striking resemblances' to *Undang-undang Melaka* (Liaw, 1976: 1).

[13] Liaw describes more than forty-four manuscripts containing versions of the *Undang-undang Melaka* (Liaw, 1976: 9-30), which, as he argues, testify to its importance (Liaw, 1976: 9).

Undang-undang Melaka[14]. Thus, details of appropriate penalties for particular crimes according to *adat* are often followed by the penalties according to the law of Allah. Perhaps the most frequent difference that arises is in connection with those laws regard killing. While according to Malay customary law this is punishable in certain circumstances by a fine or some other punishment, according to Islamic law, the punishment for killing is death. For example:

> **Jikalau ia mendatangi kampung orang lagi membunuh orang, didendanya sekati lima tahil atas kias. Itulah hukumnya, tetapi menurut hukum Allah membunuh orang itu dibunuh pula hukumnya.** (Liaw, 1976: 104)
>
> If a man trespasses upon another's compound and in addition kills someone, the fine is one *kati* and five *tahil* based on analogy. Such is the law. But according to the law of God, the punishment for killing is death. (Liaw, 1976: 105)

The *Undang-undang Melaka* opens with a reminder that all the laws contained in that text have come down from the time of Iskandar Zulkarnain, and that royal customs and rules, rules relating to high dignitaries and resolutions relating to the land, were first codified by the Malay Sultan Mahmud Shah. Following on from this introduction, the first customs and regulations listed relate to the attire of rulers together with all the royal prohibitions. For example, the first rule in the whole legal code states that, on pain of death, no one but the ruler is to wear yellow, unless with royal permission. The opening chapter (*fasal*) also contains descriptions of the qualities required of the ruler's subjects and the ruler himself:

> **Adapun segala syarat hamba raja itu atas tiga perkara: suatu benar kepada barang af'alnya, kedua menurut barang titah rajanya, mau ia zalim, mau ia tiada, fardu menurut titahnya. Ketiga ada ia mengharapkan ampun tuannya.**
> **Adapun syarat segala raja-raja itu atas empat perkara: pertama ampun, kedua murah, ketiga perkasa, keempat melakukan hukumnya dengan kaharnya. Itulah sifat segala raja-raja itu pada zaman dahulu kala turun temurun datang sekarang. Inilah kanun namanya.** (Liaw, 1976: 66)
>
> The qualities required of a ruler's subject are three in number. Firstly [he should be] honourable in all his deeds; secondly [he should] abide by the commands of the ruler;

[14] Matheson and Hooker note that *Undang-undang Melaka* refers to 'three sources for precedents, *adat* (custom), *kanun* law (regulation, law) and the law of God. *Kanun* law seems closely related to custom, but in several instances is different from God's law'. Whereas *Undang-undang Melaka* cites these three legal sources, other legal texts refer only to *hukum* (the law). Thus, Matheson and Hooker (1983: 191) suggest that in later texts, all of which are based on the Melaka Laws, 'the demands of Muslim merchants had either been satisfied or were no longer pressing, and that the tension between *adat* provision and God's law seem to have been resolved'.

> whether he [the ruler] is tyrannical or not, he [the subject] shall follow his commands; thirdly, he desires mercy from his lord.
> The qualities required of a ruler are four in number. Firstly [he should be] merciful; secondly, [he should be] generous; thirdly [he should be] courageous; and fourthly, [he should be] able to give his verdict decisively. These are the qualities [required] of a ruler from time immemorial until the present day. That is what is understood by *kanun* law. (cf. Liaw, 1976: 67)

The laws contained in this text are diverse. In particular the laws relating to gambling, alcohol consumption and theft should be noted[15], these being vices which arise in Malay texts portraying the British. Also notable for their absence are any regulations on piracy in the *Undang-undang Melaka,* an issue that was of tremendous concern for the British as well as other Europeans. British and Dutch attempts to eradicate piracy do receive some attention in a number of Malay texts.

Similarly, there are no specific laws concerning the right to bear arms in *Undang-undang Melaka*. We might imagine this issue, which was to become contentious under the British, was simply taken as a birthright, and therefore required no specific mention in legal digests. The only exception to this was the prohibition concerning the carrying of gold handled *keris*, which remained the prerogative of the sultan (Liaw, 1976: 64-67)[16].

One issue which receives a great deal of attention in *Undang-undang Melaka*, and that is noted by Malay authors as being of key interest to the British, is slavery[17]. There are several specific laws in the *Undang-undang Melaka* which make reference

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[15] Another text which describes a whole variety of vices is *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa*. In one section, the devil journeys together with Sheikh Abdullah Yamani, showing how he seduces people to commit a panorama of vices, including hypocrisy, theft, cock fighting, gambling, taking opium, sexual immorality, dishonesty in trade, etc. (see Siti Hawa Salleh, 1991: 81-98). While this journey was to a whole variety of unnamed lands, we can probably understand the description of the whole range of vices as an allegory for the contraventions of Islam that occured in Kedah in the nineteenth century, when the text was written.

[16] In addition, commoners were not allowed any metal casing on the sheath of their *keris* (Winstedt, 1938b: 84). There were also various regulations concerning the manner of wearing *keris,* as is evident for example from the detail of court protocol in *Sejarah Melayu*. In particular, Malays were to wear their *keris* in front, the opposite to the Javanese practice, as is well-known from the incident involving Hang Tuah on his visit to Java.

[17] In his essay on 'Slavery and bondage in Southeast Asian history', Reid (1983) has warned of the problems associated with the term slavery when discussing the Southeast Asian situation. In particular the term slavery is a term carrying connotations with the Atlantic slave trade. What can be described as 'vertical bonding' can be seen as central to many traditional Southeast Asian societies. Reid (1983: 6) writes of a situation where 'unequal relations can be both cooperative and intimate'. For further detail on slavery in the Malay Peninsula see Maxwell (1890b) and Endicott (1983). See also Matheson and Hooker (1983), for their survey of representations of slavery in Malay texts.

to the status of slaves. For example, these laws explain when a man can and cannot legitimately be made a slave, and the punishments for harbouring runaway slaves. In addition, other laws are sub-divided according to the status of the person who commits the offence and the person who is offended against. Those slaves were seen differently in law to free men. Thus slavery, while clearly regulated, was legitimised as part of traditional Malay society.

An examination of the laws contained in this text reveals the legal framework behind traditional Malay systems of social stratification. Certainly the opening laws of *Undang-undang Melaka,* which concern language, dress and the forging of the ruler's commands, set the ruler apart from his people, yet other laws, and in particular the penalties for committing certain crimes, point to a society with a more complicated stratification. Not just are there various ranks of ministers and free men, but even slaves are divided into various ranks, each stratum receiving varying degrees of punishment for similar crimes. For example, royal slaves receive a greater degree of protection than non-royal slaves, which emphasises the enhanced position of the ruler and the royal household in law.

Finally, in this code of laws, there are also various commentaries on the duties of ministers, who are always required to be in full attendance, ready to advise their ruler. The essential function of the advisers is again alluded to in this legal code (Liaw, 1976: 165). For the effective governance of his state, the ruler needs and relies upon the wise and judicious advice and support of his officials and ministers. Also it is crucial that correct procedures are adhered to with regard to gaining statements from witnesses and the swearing of oaths, and these procedures are described in some detail.

Summary

Summing up, it is possible to make some general observations regarding concepts of justice and the law as evinced in traditional Malay texts[18]. These will

[18] The key concepts found in the texts discussed above, are central to the whole canon of traditional Malay literature, including fantastic adventure *hikayat* and romantic *syair* as well as the more obvious historical works, 'mirrors for kings' and religious texts and treatises. In all manner of texts it is

form the basis of a model against which to compare Malay understandings of British concepts of justice and law making, as revealed in literary texts. The two main components of legal systems in traditional Malay society are demonstrated in the two texts *Sejarah Melayu* and *Tajus salatin;* the former being firmly rooted in indigenous traditions and the latter expressing Persian and Middle Eastern Islamic ideas of justice. The synthesis of the two is very much apparent in the legal digest *Undang-undang Melaka.*

The notion of justice is at the centre of a number of Malay texts. While the dispensation of justice and good rule is focused on the ruler, this is not exclusively so, and all subjects have a vital role to play in ensuring justice is maintained. The ruler should be wise in the appointment of officials to ensure that they are not oppressive. In particular, the relationship between the ruler and his ministers and officials is vital for the effective and just running of the traditional Malay state. The ruler must take into account the views and advice of his ministers, a failure to do so resulting in disaster. There is a constant stress on the importance of thorough investigation before the pronouncement of judgement.

The manifestations of a well-ruled and just state are flourishing trade and a plentiful population. The reasons behind such ideal features are explained in the warnings against tyranny and oppression contained within *Tajus salatin.* Oppressive and unjust rule will result in diminished returns for the royal exchequer and a weakened army, both of which will result in the reduced status and power of the ruler. Thus while one of the effects of just rule might be to increase the well being of the people, this does not imply that it is the dominant reason behind such a requirement.

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stressed that the most important quality of a Malay ruler is that he must be just (*adil*). Often this quality will be linked with another key quality, the ruler's generosity (*murah*). In *Hikayat raja Pasai,* in the *wasiat,* or the death bed exhortation, of Sultan Malikul Saleh, the dying king tells his two sons and the future rulers that they must always be just to their people, *serta dengan adil kamu kedua bersaudara akan segala rakyat kamu* (Jones, 1999: 25). In *Hikayat Hang Tuah* there are numerous instances where the justice and generosity of a ruler is referred to, for example, *ada seorang raja, terlalu adil dan murahnya* (Kassim Ahmad, 1975: 48). Continuing with the central idea of justice, the just ruler will always make the right investigations before making a judgement on his people. For example, in a passage from *Hikayat Seri Rama,* we are told that the reasons for the happiness of the people of the country of Indera Puri Nagara is that the ruler, Badanul, always carries out the right investigations in administering the law, *terlalu sekali ia periksa negerinya dihukumkannya dengan hukum sebenarnya* (Shellabear, 1964: 5).

Rather the necessity of just rule was to ensure that the prosperity and power of the ruler would be maximised. There was certainly the prerequisite within the contract first laid out in *Sejarah Melayu* that the people should not be punished unjustly or shamed, but the defining and ultimate requirement was the pledge of loyalty to the ruler, come what may.

As is clear from the discussion of *Undang-undang Melaka,* while there was certainly the idea that everyone should be treated in accordance with the law, this is different from the concept that all were equal before the law. The stratified nature of society, differentiating between ruler, members of the royal family, ministers and officials and free men respectively, together with the various positions of slaves, is very much reflected in the laws, such that the same crime might merit different punishment, in accordance with the status of the offender.

Finally, *Tajus salatin* and particularly *Undang-undang Melaka* make it clear that there were certain discrepancies between traditional Malay law and Islamic law. This is most apparent in the vices such as gambling, cock-fighting and drinking, which were banned under Islamic law, but often at least tolerated in the Malay judicial tradition. This occasional conflict is also evident in the contrasting punishments offered in the Melaka legal digest.

Malay portrayals of British justice and law

With the above ideas of justice and law in traditional Malay society in mind, the second part of this chapter will consider how representations of justice and law under the British stand in comparison. Initially a number of texts from the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century will be discussed. Following on from this a particular discussion of Abdullah's understanding of British ideas of justice will precede an examination of texts from the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century. The last part of the chapter will consider those texts which give a critical portrayal of the systems of justice and governance under the British.

Late eighteenth and early nineteenth century texts

Hikayat Nakhoda Muda, written by Lauddin around 1788, gives an interesting personal perspective on the contrasting systems of justice operated by the British and Dutch. A principal aim of the earlier part of this text is to demonstrate the loyalty of Nakhoda Muda of Semangka, or Kyai Demang as he is also known, towards his sultan and also towards the Dutch governor of Banten. Even when Kyai Demang is wrongly accused of allowing two traders to go to British Bengkulu, and fined 200 Spanish dollars by the judge in Banten, he maintains his loyalty to his sultan and the Dutch governor. Thus, the behaviour of Nakhoda Muda is very much in line with the obligations of any traditional Malay subject. The text presents Kyai Demang as an exemplary local chief, depicting him as a loyal and honest subject, despite the fact that he has been wrongly accused.

In a later development, as a result of Kyai Demang's supposed openness to the British, the Dutch governor in Banten sends a contingent of Dutch soldiers to Semangka, to maintain a Dutch presence and to prevent the settlement from falling into British hands. The Dutch sergeant who heads this contingent treats the Malay inhabitants badly, but nonetheless Kyai Demang still maintains his loyalty, always consulting the Dutchman when he feels it necessary. Thus, despite the oppressive nature of Dutch rule, the hero maintains his loyalty in accordance with the principle enshrined in the contract between Demang Lebar Daun and Sri Tri Buana.

However, disaster strikes for Kyai Demang when a British ship arrives, captained by Captain Forrest. Forrest asks for provisions and with the agreement of the Dutch sergeant, Kyai Demang willingly orders his people to supply the British ship. This event provided the opportunity for a deceitful story to be concocted by the Dutchman and a Malay accomplice, with the aim of having Kyai Demang accused of selling pepper to the British. As a result of this accusation Kyai Demang is detained and all his possessions seized. Realising that their fate may involve being sent to the Dutch prison island of Pulau Damar, Kyai Demang's sons persuade him that he has no choice but to escape and leave Semangka. Forced to flee, Kyai Demang and his followers make an arduous journey overland to Krui, an area under British

jurisdiction, with the intention of seeking British protection. Kyai Demang sends his son, Nakhoda Lela, to Fort Marlborough to make the bid for permission to settle in British territory. In his description of the deliberations undertaken by the British when deciding whether such protection might be offered, it is important to note that the author depicts the undertaking of a thorough and detailed process of investigation and consultation before a decision can be reached.

> **Maka kata Nakhoda Lela: 'Baiklah tuan, hamba bilangkan dari pada mula permulaannya. Tetapi bicara itu ada panjang sedikit'. Maka kata kemandur: 'Tiada mengapa, bilang juga, supaya hamba dengar'** (Drewes, 1961: 151)
>
> Nakhoda Lela said: 'I can inform you of everything, from the beginning to the end, but the story is fairly long'. The governor said, 'No matter, tell me nonetheless, so that I may hear it all.'

In addition to ensuring that he had heard all the facts, the British governor sought confirmation of Captain Forrest's story from anyone who happened to be in Fort Marlborough. This description of investigative processes stands in stark contrast to the carelessness of the Dutch resident in Banten who failed to carry out the appropriate steps before ordering the imprisonment of Kyai Demang. As already established, one of the most important duties of the ideal Malay ruler was to carry out investigations as meticulously as possible, and the British governor is clearly portrayed as carrying out his duties in accordance with the ideal model of traditional Malay conventions. By way of contrast, the deceitful behaviour of the Dutch officers, and the failure of the Dutch ruler to sufficiently look into their allegations leads him down a familiar path of making what is clearly portrayed as a transgressive unjust decision.

Thus, the picture of British justice that is developed in this late eighteenth century text is quite clear. The British are linked with just and fair application of the law in contrast with the corrupt and oppressive Dutch. Permission is not only given to Kyai Demang and his followers to start a new life in British territory, but also a guarantee of protection from the Dutch is offered. Through the closing words of the British governor, Lauddin presents a resounding endorsement of the system of justice and law in the British controlled area:

> **'Kalau datang suruhan Holanda mencari kamu, boleh kami bilang tiada kami tahu. Dan lagi, kalau Holanda tahu juga pada kamu, kalau kamu takut kami kasihkan pada Holanda, tiada adat Kompeni Inggeris begitu. Jangan kamu takut. Percayalah kamu kepada Kompeni Inggeris.'** (Drewes, 1961: 152)
>
> 'Should any person be sent by the Dutch government looking for you, we will tell them we know nothing of the matter. What is more, even if they should know where you are, do not be afraid that we will give you up to the Dutch for that is not the way of the British Company. Do not be afraid. Have faith in the British Company.'

A similar comparison of the British with the Dutch is to be found in the early nineteenth century text, *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi.* This is essentially a poem that demonstrates how the British brought prosperity and security to Batavia (Murtagh, 2002). A particular factor in bringing harmony to Batavia was the nature of rule and particularly justice under Minto and Raffles. The apparently ideal conditions created by the British are contrasted with the bad and difficult rule that had preceded them under the Dutch and French. In the introductory section it is stated that the orders of the French made the lives of the ordinary people very hard, with particular reference to the orders (*perintah*) to destroy infrastructure prior to the inevitable arrival of the British. These opening scenes of chaos and hardship are contrasted with the stability under the British:

Sekarang ini perintahan Inggeris	Nowadays under British rule
Bukannya sebagai perintah Perancis	It's not like it was under French rule
Perintah Perancis tak boleh habis	Rule under the French was relentless
Banyak orang jadi menangis.	It reduced many men to tears.

The author describes the transformation of society under the British such that law is described as being 'fair and perfect' (*perintahnya benar dengan sempurna).* In the immediate aftermath of the British victories, Lord Minto's rule is painted as having been exemplary, particularly in terms of the qualities one would expect from a traditional Malay monarch. Minto's rule was 'incomparably good' (*perintahnya benar tiada terperi*), and he carried out all investigations thoroughly (*sudah sempurna sekalian periksa*). In addition, the whole population was suitably respectful of his rule (*sekalian rakyat takut dan ngeri*). Raffles is similarly portrayed as ruling over his people in a just manner (*menghukumkan rakyat serta adilnya*). A point that further draws our attention to the theme of justice is the fact that of all the officials appointed

by Raffles, the only one mentioned in the text is the Dutchman, Willem Jacob Cranssen, the official perhaps most connected with justice and security in Batavia[19].

The change instituted by Raffles concerning the carrying of weapons is another important theme in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* which also occurs in a number of other texts. The anonymous author of *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* gives no specific comment about his attitude towards the ban on the carrying of weapons. However, the quatrains that immediately follow, which are extremely positive in their description of plentiful trade, suggest that the suppression of personal arms is seen by the author in a welcome light. While one of the notable features of this text is the length and detail of its market description (Murtagh, 2002), the audience is left none the wiser regarding the specific nature of any changes in the socio-economic conditions of the ordinary inhabitants. However, the purpose of the depictions of the prosperity of the city, focussing on the growth in trade exemplified by the flourishing market, must be seen primarily as serving to demonstrate the power and legitimacy of the British rulers. The primary condition for such growth is the just rule of Minto and Raffles. For this reason we must see the author's understanding of the nature of British rule in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* as very much in accordance with traditional Malay values of justice. This traditional ethos is dominant, despite the arguably more realistic elements to be found elsewhere in the text. Justice is seen by the author as functioning primarily to enhance the standing and authority of the ruler, and according to the author's traditional Malay expectations, the administration of Minto and Raffles was exemplary.

We also see assignation of ideal attributes to a British official in another early nineteenth century text, *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala*. When introducing Lord Minto, specific mention is made of the just nature of his rule:

> **... maka terlalulah adil serta dengan murahnya raja menurut hukum dan adat negeri.** (Skinner, 1982: 26)
>
> ... he was very just and generous, in accordance with the law and tradition of the country.

[19] The bench of magistrates was set up in Batavia under Cranssen (Wurtzburg, 1954: 184), who was also appointed chief of police.

Despite this opening, however, the concept of justice is not central to the structure of *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala*, with the themes of the unrivalled power of the British and the strength of trade being more to the fore. One less typical theme, which repeatedly attracts the attention of Ahmad Rijaluddin, is prostitution (Skinner, 1978: 478-9; Hadijah Rahmat, 2001: 178-18) and it is in two of the sections dealing with the subject of the brothels and prostitutes in Bengal, that Ahmad's observations, while undoubtedly preoccupied with the subject of prostitution, are most revealing regarding his understanding of the British legal system at work.

The first of those two sections describes the antics of drunken servants of the city's well-to-do European elite fighting over prostitutes in Machua Bazar. Ahmad understood the fighting that erupted on a frequent basis to be due to the inebriation of the servants. It should of course be noted that drunkenness and the availability of alcohol is a theme that Ahmad returns to constantly, though as is also the case with prostitution, his depictions of such scenes do not extend to criticism:

> **Maka datanglah adalat orang tana dan berkandas2 maka ditangkapnya sekalian mereka itu dibawaknya taruh kepada suata gedung hampir rumah polis. Maka pagi2 dilepas oleh penghulu polis takut gaduh segala orang besar2 hendak makan hajeri lagi pun tiada apa salahnya sekalian mereka itu sehingga sebab ia mabuk menjadi gaduh, demikianlah sehari2 tiadalah khali.** (Skinner, 1982: 60)
>
> The officers of justice arrive on the scene and they [the drunken servants] are all arrested and brought to be held in a building near the police station. Then early in the morning they are freed by the chief of police, afraid that their masters will make a fuss for they want to eat their kedgeree[20], and besides they have committed no crime other than getting drunk and making a row, that is how it is without exception on a daily basis.

While technically it seems that no actual offences were being committed other than drunkenness, a picture is created here of the ruling class determining how the application of the law and the policing of the state is carried out. Ahmad portrays a situation where the demands of the hungry British and Dutch are prioritised by the police inspector. What is more Ahmad lists the attitude of the European masters, before the consideration of whether any crime had indeed been committed.

[20] *Hajeri* undoubtedly refers to kedgeree, a favoured British breakfast dish in India (see *kedgeree* entry, in Crooke, 1994: 476).

Later on in *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* Ahmad relates a long story about how the tavern-keepers, in conjunction with the prostitutes, trick the sailors. The nature of the deception is illustrated with the case of a Dacca man. The scam involves enticing a sailor into the tavern, therein offering alcohol and hemp such that the sailor becomes intoxicated. He would then be locked up with a prostitute, and on coming to, would be persuaded that his relationship with the woman was a mutual one. Eventually the tavern-keeper would take the hapless sailor to a boatswain, and give him over in return for a sum of money, to be divided between tavern-keeper, prostitute and sailor[21]. Thus this practice benefited not just the tavern-keeper and prostitute, but also the ship's foreman, by getting a supply of cheap labour.

Ahmad reports that when the case of the Dacca man was brought to the attention of Lord Minto, the forces of law and order rolled into action. The tavern keeper was brought to the chief justice, and was flogged and fined for his crime. The prostitute was also ordered to pay a fine, despite the fact that she had not apparently committed a crime. From this time on, due to the actions of Lord Minto, peace was restored. Tellingly, when the tavern-keeper tried to bribe the inspector to allow him to escape, the inspector said that he would have allowed him to go if he had been acting only on the instructions of the police. However, as the action came about as a result of the orders of Lord Minto, the inspector, out of fear and loyalty, carried out the punishment exactly as ordered (Skinner, 1982: 70).

The law in Bengal is not presented as perfect or incorruptible. Rather the correct application of the law is shown as being very much dependent upon the involvement of the governor-general. Indeed, when Minto summoned the nawabs and other leading men from the region to discuss the problem, they had already been aware of the situation for some time, though without seeing fit to take action. Only through the direct intervention and participation of Lord Minto, did the tavern-keeper come before the high court. Thus in this section, we again see the application of justice coming about only as a result of the indigenous population's loyalty to, or fear of, the British ruler.

[21] As Ahmad reports, the sailor would give his share up to the prostitute as a result of her pledging undying love.

The scam so elaborately described by Ahmad was problematic because of the inconvenience it was causing to trade, the primary concern of the British authorities[22]. Ahmad spends many pages describing the comings and goings of ships from many parts of the world, and the wealth and supremacy that had been built upon such trade. He then uses his main description of the application of justice by the British, to show how harmony was restored and the best conditions for trade were maintained. Ahmad is not apparently concerned with discussing the moral aspects of prostitution and drunkenness[23], but through his retelling of these somewhat amusing stories, the author's understanding of issues relating to justice and the British application of justice is revealed. With the example of servants being released in time to serve breakfast to their European masters, there is certainly no concept of equality before the law in Ahmad's writing. Indeed, the law is seen as a mechanism that swings into action only on the direct intervention and involvement of the British rulers. Certainly the description of the actions of the indigenous rulers, already aware of the tavern-keeper's tricks, but not informing the British governor-general, suggests a system that is not running according to the traditional Malay model. Rather, Ahmad is portraying a reality in which the inaction of the nawabs and the potential for corruption of the prison keeper are only kept in check by the power and right behaviour of the British rulers. In this respect it bears similarities with the situation of Alauddin in *Sejarah Melayu* who was forced to take action into his own hands to ensure that his officers were diligent in their application of law enforcement.

Thus, in all three texts discussed above there is something of a celebration of justice as it is carried out under the British. In *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda*, Kyai Demang and his followers literally up-camp and relocate their community in order to live under British protection. *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* celebrates the restoration of order in the 'sick' state of Batavia such that it is transformed into a healthy, prosperous and, most importantly, a just state. In *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala,* the prosperity of Bengal is attributed to the fine governance of the British, of which

[22] As Skinner notes, (1982: 134), Calcutta port regulations of 1825 stipulated a punishment for commanders forcibly making up crew numbers. See also Milburn, 1825: 261.

[23] This is in contrast with the moral attitude taken by Munsyi Abdullah towards drinking and prostitution.

the appropriate application of justice is seen as an essential tool. However as has been noted, there is nothing revolutionary or innovative in the state ethics of the governments described by these Malay writers. The qualities noted are completely consistent with traditional Malay expectations.

Abdullah on justice

Abdullah was much preoccupied with the issue of justice and law. In *Hikayat Abdullah*, he discusses ideas of justice related to Dutch rule in Melaka, British rule in the Straits Settlements and also the rule of the sultan in Singapore. In his *Kisah pelayaran Abdullah,* it is the injustice in the independent Malay states that are the subject of his criticism. Abdullah was enthusiastic about many aspects of the British administration, though he does occasionally make critical comments regarding the application, or rather non-application, of the law.

The earliest reference to justice in *Hikayat Abdullah* comes in the section describing the benefits brought to Melaka by Mr Farquhar, during the first brief period of British rule. He described flourishing trade with men coming from overseas to make a living and to settle in Melaka. In terms of the system of justice he wrote:

> **Maka sungguhpun negeri itu negeri Inggeris, akan tetapinya hukumannya dan adatnya seperti adat Holanda, dan seperti adat bicaranya, dan nama2 orang besarnya semuanya seperti bahasa Holanda juga adanya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 58)
>
> Certainly the country was British, but the customs and laws were like those of the Dutch. For instance, proceedings in the courts and the titles of important officials were all in the Dutch language. (cf. Hill, 1970: 64-65)

Following on from the portrayal of the fine conditions in Melaka, this description of the system of justice should be understood as being very much part of the basis for the conditions of wealth created under Farquhar. According to traditional Malay ideals, a just ruler was essential to the prosperity of the kingdom, and Abdullah portrays Melaka under Farquhar as a flourishing ideal city. Abdullah recognises that during this first British period, many aspects of the Dutch system remained intact including the court system. He certainly praises the Dutch system here, albeit under the auspices of the British. However, in a somewhat contradictory manner, in a later chapter on the return of the Dutch to Melaka, Abdullah observes that the Dutch introduced changes

to the methods of administration, system of government, and the law that had existed under the British (*ditukarnya segala adat dan perintah dan hukuman Inggeris itu*). Abdullah is very critical of modifications instituted by the Dutch, his main disapproval centring on the imposition of several new taxes. This contradiction is not easily explained, but the key point to be drawn from these two descriptions is that, when the British took over from the Dutch, they were seen as bringing renewed prosperity, albeit with the system of administration retaining many Dutch features. However when the Dutch returned, the rule of law is described as being much more oppressive, and Abdullah blames this on specific reforms introduced by the Dutch.

Our understanding of Abdullah's dissatisfaction with the changes introduced by the Dutch is enhanced by the story involving the secretary to the Dutch governor, known as Mr Sweep (*Tuan Penyapu*). This official was charged with improving the cleanliness of Melaka, and in particular it was the oppressive manner in which such changes were implemented that attracts Abdullah's scorn. In principle, Abdullah was in favour of improving hygiene. However, he disapproved of the bullying and oppressive tactics used by Mr Sweep to meet these praiseworthy ends (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 182-3). Abdullah creates a feeling of general disenchantment by recording the exclamation of local people that while it was good news that the infamous Mr Sweep had died, only when the Dutch governor himself was dead would peace be restored to the city (*Ini belum cukup, raja Holanda inipun kalau mati, baharulah sentosa negeri Melaka ini*). Thus the change in laws, administration and system of government initiated by the Dutch are seen as having disrupted the wellbeing and safety of the city. The general desire of the population to be rid of their ruler was a result of that ruler's failure to apply the law in a fair and appropriate manner. In particular his application of justice fell contrary to the key requirements according to traditional Malay expectations. It should be recognised that it was hardly in keeping with traditional Malay ideals concerning the relationship between ruler and ruled, for the populace to wish a ruler dead[24]. However, it is significant that there is certainly no indication in this passage that the common folk were wishing for the

[24] While we cannot say for certain that Malays in traditional society never wished their ruler dead, this is a sentiment that was certainly unlikely to be recorded in the highly stylised court literature.

return of a Malay ruler. Rather they are wishing for the coming of a just ruler, and the end to oppression brought about by his officials.

In addition to the incident discussed above, Abdullah censures the Dutch for their use of various instruments of torture while ruling in Melaka. The torture room, and various instruments used to induce suffering, are described in some detail. Torture is also linked back to the Portuguese, by stressing that the prison used by the Dutch had been constructed during the Portuguese era. However, we are told that the dungeon, together with the torture apparatus, was destroyed on the orders of Lord Minto:

> **Dibuangkannya adat jahat dan bengis itu. Semuanya disuruhnya buangkan ke laut adanya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 52)
>
> This wicked and frightful custom was thrown out. Everything was ordered to be cast into the sea. (cf. Hill, 1970: 61)

Thus, as is typical of Abdullah's style, he first describes a situation complete with its various deficiencies and then demonstrates how it has been improved. On this occasion, the story is structured to illustrate how the cruelty of the Dutch and Portuguese has been done away with by the British[25]. Later in the text Abdullah describes Minto's visit to the old prison and the torture chamber, and also the release of the prisoners. The old dark dungeon (*terongko gelap*) of the Dutch is contrasted with the new British prison built in its place. Instead of torture and conditions more

[25] Another comparison of the British with the Dutch can be found in *Tuhfat al-nafis*. Because the text centres on the history of the Bugis rulers in Riau, there tends to be much greater involvement with the Dutch than with the British. Evaluations as to the just nature of rulers are few and far between in the text. There is one particular passage of *Tuhfat al-nafis* where the Dutch are portrayed in a bad light and this is followed immediately by reported British criticisms concerning this behaviour. In essence the behaviour of the Dutch, in terms of their propensity for making war on 'dark-skinned people' (*orang kulit hitam*) is reported by Raja Ali Haji as having led to a situation in Melaka which destroys the word of Allah the Almighty, who has commanded that people should live on this earth 'in prosperity and justice' (*dengan jalan yang adil dan makmurnya;* Matheson Hooker, 1998: 271). A letter is then quoted which was allegedly sent by the British Company to the Dutch admiral Pieter Jacob van Braam, in which the Dutchman is accused by the British of destroying two or three countries belonging to 'dark-skinned peoples'. ('*Engkau seorang hendak mencari untung dan nama dan dua tiga buah negeri orang kulit hitam engkau binasakan, dan beberapa pula jiwa manusia yang hilang dan beberapa orang yang duduk di dalam kesenangan di dalam (tanah) buminya jadi haru-hara ke sana ke mari dan hilang kemuliaannya. Adakah patut demikian itu khianatkan orang dengan tanah buminya jadi binasa?*'; Matheson Hooker, 1998: 271). In *Tuhfat al-nafis* Raja Ali Haji also makes a comparison between the British and Dutch in relation to their response to piracy. However, in this case while both parties are portrayed as acting equally harshly against a Malay sultan who had not acted as quickly as he might to reign in piracy, it is the Malay sultan, who comes off worse for his failure to eradicate the practice (see Matheson Hooker, 1998: 406-415).

akin to hell (*seperti orang masuk dalam neraka)*, a far more liberal regime ensures that the only punishment is the loss of freedom (*adapun susahnya itu hanya tiada boleh berjalan keluar kemana-mana*).

To further understand Abdullah's views on justice, or indeed systems wanting in justice, it is useful to look at *Kisah pelayaran Abdullah,* in which he recounts his voyage to the Malay states of Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan. Abdullah was in the position of being able to step outside of the British ruled territories of Melaka and Singapore and draw comparisons with those Malay states. It is in these comparisons that Abdullah is perhaps most revealing. Abdullah's numerous negative comments regarding systems of Malay rule and governance seem to stand in contrast with his experience of the British ruled Straits Settlements. Though this comparison is not always stated outright, a passage towards the end of his narrative confirms this. Abdullah declares:

> **Sebermula, maka apabila sahaya ketahui akan segala perbezaan dan kelainan adat Melayu dengan adat-adat Inggeris itu, maka mengucap syukurlah sahaya dengan beribu-ribu syukur kepada Allah, sebab sahaya telah diperanakkan di bawah bendera Inggeris dan beroleh aman sentiasa, bukannya seperti orang yang telah merasa seksa dan sengsara, pada sediakalanya dalam bodoh dan kejahatan itu adanya.** (Kassim Ahmad, 1981: 90)
>
> When I consider all the differences between Malay and British customs, I give thanks to Allah thousands of times that I was born under the British flag and that I can live always in peace, not as someone who knows only torment and oppression and ignorance and wickedness.

Abdullah highlighted the tyrannical and oppressive rule of rajas as the principal cause of what he considered to be the backwardness of the Malay states[26]. The likelihood of false accusation by the ruler served to dull any desire on the part of the general populace to acquire wealth or to engage in enterprise. Abdullah recounts that while in Kelantan, he had a conversation with some locals who reported that the raja freely took the people's property and daughters, and could not be opposed. So bad was the situation, apparently, that the men begged Abdullah to take them back to Singapore with him. Thus Abdullah is able to contrast the situation in Kelantan with Singapore, using the words and opinion of the Kelantanese witnesses to criticise the

[26] The reason for the poor governance is based on lack of education (see Kassim Ahmad, 1981: 20), a subject very dear to Abdullah's heart and which will be discussed in Chapter Five.

situation, and thereby to promote and praise the situation in Singapore. However it should be noted that Abdullah does not see the solution as being a choice between Malay and British traditions. He is not simply making an argument for the adoption of the British system, or for the subjugation of the Malay states by the British. For while Abdullah is often described as being a proponent of all things British, the solution that he suggests to Tengku Temena concerning the nature of rule and kingship is that the Malay rulers should be looking back to their traditions to find the answers to difficulties. In this key section he underlines the traditional ideal:

> **Adapun apabila seorang dijadikan Allah ia raja, bukannya sebab hendak memuaskan nafsunya dan berbini sepuluh dua puluh atau mencari harta dan membunuh orang dengan aniayanya, melainkan sebab disuruh Allah memeliharakan manusia, supaya tiada dianiayai oleh seorang akan seorang; itulah gunanya. Maka segala itu, patutlah segala raja-raja itu menaruh kitab Tajus-salatin (ertinya, makuta segala raja-raja) dan menilik akan dia pada tiap-tiap hari dan mencari orang yang tahu dan belajar daripadanya dan menerima segala nasihat orang yang alim supaya boleh Tengku [Temena; BM] ketahui hal segala raja- raja yang adil dan yang zalim[27].** (Kassim Ahmad, 1981: 73)
>
> God makes a man a ruler, not so that he can satisfy his passions and have ten or twenty wives and accumulate wealth and kill his subjects through oppression, but rather it is God's will that the ruler look after his people, so that no man may oppress another; that is the purpose of government. This is why all rulers should possess the book *Tajus salatin*; and they should consult it every day. They should seek a good teacher from whom to learn, and accept the advice of wise men; so you [Tengku Temena] will know all the things which differentiate just rulers from tyrants.

Thus, Abdullah is not suggesting that the Malays did not already have a suitable model for justice and governance within their own tradition. Certainly, as has been discussed, *Tajus salatin* owes much to Middle Eastern and Islamic concepts of justice and kingship, in contrast to other Malay legal digests and chronicles, where pre-Islamic political concepts and indigenous customary law were much to the fore. It may well be for this reason that *Tajus salatin* was so appealing to Abdullah.

Abdullah's other main criticism of the Malay sultans is against what he perceives to be their obsession with decorum and tradition. He felt that the attention given to ritual was wrongly prioritised over working to improve the lot of their subjects. Thus, it is noted that in Trengganu there is a whole range of rules and

[27] This advice clearly draws on the final chapter of *Tajus salatin* itself, where Bukhari advises rulers to consult his text once having completed their prayers, in order that they receive full advice and benefit. It demonstrates Abdullah's familiarity with this text.

regulations concerning the wearing of the colour yellow and the carrying of umbrellas, yet there is no prohibition of vices such as smoking opium and gambling (Kassim Ahmad, 1981: 21). The British had instituted prohibitions against these vices in the Straits Settlements, and their actions may well have been the inspiration for Abdullah's criticism of the same vices in the Malay states.

Abdullah's concern is that Malay rulers ruled for themselves and not for the good of their subjects. While the specific comparison is only occasionally made in his travelogue, the underlying contrast is always with the Straits Settlements. For as is remarked upon on several occasions in *Hikayat Abdullah*, Abdullah believed the British to be passing certain laws not to raise taxes or to cement the status of the ruler, but to improve the lot of the people[28].

Having considered the main thrust of Abdullah's criticisms of the situation regarding justice and the law in Melaka prior to the arrival of the British, and the faults he perceived regarding these issues in the Malay states of the east coast, the discussion will now turn to considering how Abdullah perceived the British, regarding justice. The opening few chapters of his *hikayat* are used to lay the foundations for his first pronouncement as to the nature of British justice. In addition to the descriptions of how the old Dutch prison and instruments of torture were destroyed by Minto, Abdullah also discusses Raffles' opinions regarding Dutch attitudes to the natives of Melaka:

> **'Benci sahaya sangat akan kelakuan Holanda2 yang diam di Melaka itu, sebab mereka itu sekalian menghinakan orang Melayu dan tiada boleh sekedudukan dengan dia.'** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 79)
>
> 'I truly hate the behaviour of the Dutch who are in Melaka because they all humiliate the Malays and they will not treat them on equal terms.'

[28] This point is further exemplified in Abdullah's observations on the backwardness of Pahang. Searching for the possible reasons for this backwardness, he discounts the effects of piracy, the quality of the soil and the laziness of the inhabitants, deciding instead that the poverty should be ascribed to the fact that the population lives in fear of its ruler. The state of Pahang should be blamed on 'the wickedness and stupidity of the rajas' (*sebab kejahatan dan kebebalan raja-rajanya).* The inevitable contrast with British rule in Singapore leads Abdullah to reflect that in Singapore 'We are as good as rajas; no one fears another and no one can oppress another. And the reason is that the administration in all its actions has one essential aim – the happiness of the people' (Kassim Ahmad, 1981: 20).

Abdullah's views on justice can be seen as drawing very heavily on the views held by high British officials. Thus, for example, he first records the theoretical viewpoint held by the British, in the form of Raffles' quote, to be followed by practical demonstrations of such an egalitarian attitude in the form of Minto's and Raffles' attitude towards the local population. He notes that Raffles had time for the opinions of all, and always treated people with due respect. Similarly, in his account of Minto's arrival in Melaka, and his tours around Melaka and its environs, the equal respect he showed toward people of all backgrounds comes to the fore. Comparable characteristics are ascribed to Farquhar. Thus, the key point that Abdullah draws on, and which is a significant break from anything in the Malay tradition, is the idea of equality of all before the law.

Towards the beginning of *Hikayat Abdullah*, the author uses three sequential chapters to focus on three British officials; Farquhar, Raffles and Minto. In each of these chapters he describes the various attributes of the British officials in a positive, though not uncritical, light. Having spent three chapters deliberating on the virtues of the three rulers, Abdullah concludes the chapter on Minto by professing his faith and belief in the British justice system. The idea of equality before the law that Abdullah associates with the British is compared with the privileges normally afforded to Malay princes and Chinese elites as a result of their high rank. Abdullah notes that whereas Lord Minto was a very unassuming man, with time for all races and peoples regardless of their wealth, some of his officials liked to show off their position and would sometimes annoy and oppress people in the market. However, Abdullah argues strongly that common people were fearful of these British officials only because of their previous experience with Malay and Chinese elites. He suggests that the ordinary people (unlike himself) did not appreciate the superior nature of the rule of the British. He states:

> **Maka mereka itu sekalian tiada tau baiknya adat Inggeris. Jangankan orang2 raja besar, jikalau raja besar itu sekalipun membuat barang apa yang tiada patut, boleh dibawa bicara akan dia. Jiakalu andainya ia membunuh orang, dapat tiada iapun dibunuh hukumnya. Karena sekali-kali tiada diluluskan oleh hukum Inggeris seorang boleh membunuh yang tiada patut kepada orang lain, baik orang besar, baik orang kecil, baik raja atau rakyat, semuanya sama juga hukumnya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 104-5)

> None of the people understood how good is the rule of the British. Under this rule, a case may be brought not just against the ruler's men, but even the ruler himself, should he do something inappropriate. Should he kill a man, for example, he himself will certainly be sentenced to death. For under British law, it is never allowed that one man shall wrongfully kill another, whether great or small, prince or commoner, all are the same under the law. (cf. Hill, 1970: 95)

Abdullah is proud to show off his superior understanding of the situation, of what he perceives to be the new type of rule that has been brought to the Malay world by the British[29]. He carefully lays foundations to show that his views are very much in harmony with Minto, Raffles and Farquhar. However, he also sets himself apart from his fellow Malays, whom he portrays as not having attuned their perceptions of power and authority with the new British reality.

Contrasting attitudes held by the Malay and British elites regarding justice are revealed in the chapter concerned with the stabbing of Mr Farquhar. The arrangement of that chapter serves to further clarify the author's preference for the British system and his disdain for what he sees as antiquated Malay attitudes. Different approaches to justice come to the fore in the discussion between Raffles and Sultan Hussain Shah concerning the appropriate punishment for commoners who commit treason against their ruler.

> **'Kalau adat Melayu orang itu dibunuh habis2 dengan anak bininya dan kaum keluarganya. Maka tiang rumahnya dibalikkan ke atas dan bumbungan rumahnya ke bawah dan tanah bekas rumahnya itupun dibuangkan ke laut adanya.'** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 219)
>
> According to Malay custom, the person would be killed, together with his immediate family and other relations. His house would be turned upside down, with its pillars turned upwards, and its roof pulled downwards, and the earth on which it stands would be thrown into the sea. (cf. Hill, 1970: 174)

The sultan's description of Malay custom clearly draws on the contract between Sri Tri Buana and Demang Lebar Daun discussed in the first part of this chapter.

[29] The reality of course was somewhat different. Abdullah certainly embraces the theoretical underpinnings of the British system of justice. He does not cite any examples in his text to suggest that he was aware that in reality the situation was different. Even so, it is an important principle that differentiated the British system from the Malay one.

In referring to one of the best known incidents from *Sejarah Melayu*, Abdullah sets up a deliberate juxtaposition, setting that prime example of Malay tradition with regard to justice and application of law against the contrary view of the British, which was indicative of a new modern order.

> **'Itu hukum bukannya adil. Maka kalau barangsiapa yang bersalah, dialah patut dihukumkan. Mengapa anak bininya yang tiada tau barang suatu dibunuh? Sekarang Tuan Sultan dan Tumenggung serta segala tuan2 yang ada dalam majelis ini bolehlah menengar: ada tersebut dalam undang2 adat hukum Inggeris orang itu yang mendurhaka patut digantung. Maka jika tiada dapat hidupnya melainkan matinya itu digantung juga dan lagi anak bininya itu boleh Kompeni beri gaji sampai ia berlaki lain atau anaknya itu sampai tau mencari. Demikianlah adat orang putih.'** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 219)
>
> 'That law is not just. Whosoever does wrong deserves to be punished. But why should his wife and children, who know nothing of it, also be put to death? Now shall Your Highness and Tengku Temenggong and all of you at this meeting hear that under the laws of the British someone who commits treason must be hanged. If he is no longer alive but dead, he may still be hanged, but the Company will give his wife and children an allowance until she remarries or they are old enough to seek a living. This is the law of the white man.' (cf. Hill, 1970: 174)

Abdullah does not immediately put forth his own view on these conflicting ideas regarding appropriate punishments for treason. Nonetheless it is noteworthy that the story immediately following on from this describes the chaos caused by the temenggong's men due to their fighting with *keris*. Much to the annoyance of Raffles, the Malay ruler is unable to control his own men. While the temenggong can only regret that, were it a Malay state, he would be able to put his own troublesome men to death, the solution arrived at by Raffles was to move the temenggong and his household out from the main settlement on Singapore to Telok Belanga. However, even following this move, the sultan's and temenggong's men continued to wear the *keris,* and inevitably when fighting broke out men would be killed. Thus, Abdullah reports, Raffles told the temenggong and the sultan that the carrying of arms would be banned in Singapore. The reply given by the sultan, that the carrying of arms was the birthright of Malay rulers, and as such could not be changed, again highlights the polarity between Malay and British views on justice and order. The sultan's argument that to ban the carrying of arms would cause a Malay to feel as if he were naked was met by a diplomatic response from Raffles, whereby he allowed a somewhat symbolic residue of twenty-four men to remain armed.

The momentous nature of the change in society that Abdullah repeatedly writes of is crystallised in this section concerning the right to bear arms. The old traditional Malay system based on *adat* and the *keris* is being replaced by the new British system with its emphasis on law and order. Abdullah is perfectly clear as to where his inclinations lie. While recognising that Malays might perceive the ban on carrying arms to be a slight on the traditions of their forefathers, he nonetheless sees such resentments as evidence of the ignorance of the Malays in the light of the obvious advantages the new system brings in terms of peace and order. He also hints at the idea, which perhaps the new capitalist situation in Singapore would have highlighted, that the old traditional ways of behaviour of Malay men were disadvantaging them:

> **Maka patutlah orang memakai senjata tatkala dalam perang atau sebab takut akan binatang yang buas2. Maka jikalau tiada dalam hal itu bahwasanya sia2 adanya, dan lagi pula memakai senjata itu mendatangkan congkak dan kebesaran dan malas pada pekerjaan, maka sebab itulah mendatangkan miskin dan kelemahan dalam negeri sebab kurang orang bekerja adanya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 225)
>
> It is appropriate to bear arms when at war, or if afraid of wild animals. But if not in situations such as this, then it is unnecessary. What is more, the bearing of arms causes conceit and self-aggrandisement and reluctance to work, factors which cause poverty and weakness in the country due to lack of workers. (cf. Hill, 1970: 178)

Besides the laws on the carrying of arms, other laws introduced by the British specifically discussed by Abdullah, include laws relating to gambling, slavery and piracy. The chapter discussing the gambling laws is introduced with a declaration that everyone was happy to hear the raft of new laws and regulations introduced by Raffles 'in order to protect Singapore's inhabitants from danger and crime' (*supaya terpelihara segala isi negeri dari pada segala bahaya dan kejahatan adanya*). The only exception to the generally favourable reception came from among the Chinese population, concerned about restrictions on gambling. Abdullah argued that Raffles' move against gambling should be seen in the light of his desire to improve the welfare of all people, and certainly the moralistic Abdullah saw gambling as tremendously harmful, not just to the gambler himself, but also to society generally[30].

[30] A similar sentiment is expressed by the anonymous author of *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau*. In the opening of this poem Raffles is praised for having introduced improvements, exemplified by his banning of cock-fighting and gambling (Raimy Ché-Ross, 2003). For background to these abolitions see Raimy Ché-Ross (2003: 36, note 21). Comparison can be made with the twentieth

Thus Abdullah, and also apparently the vast majority of the local population, welcomed laws that served not just to maintain order, but which also promoted the welfare of society. While the British instituted these laws, these were also changes that accorded with Islam. Thus one should be wary of seeing Abdullah's reactions to these prohibitions as clearly indicating the acceptance and welcoming of British ideas, for they can equally be understood as Islamic ideas[31].

A similar view can be seen with regard to the laws on slavery[32]. Abdullah first describes a situation of slavery which troubles him very greatly. He then shows how his thinking is in accord with the British when he discusses the situation with Raffles, who comments that the wicked trade will not last much longer, for reports to Parliament were already recommending its cessation (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 234). This incident can be seen as preparing the reader for a later episode, which demonstrates the full rise of British law and regulations and the complete demise of Malay tradition. While describing the governorship of Crawfurd, Abdullah records the moment when the proclamation was read out in the streets of the city. informing the populace that 'full judicial and legislative control throughout Singapore had passed to the East India Company' *(segala hukum dan perintah negeri Singapura ini semuanya telah pulanglah kepada Kompeni Inggeris).* The complete humiliation that this represented for the sultan and temenggong, a degradation that had been initiated with moves against the wearing of the *keris*, is fully exemplified in Abdullah's depiction of the conversation between Crawfurd and the sultan, concerning the freeing of the sultan's slave-girls:

> **Sahaya ada mendapat perintah dari pada Tuan Besar dari Benggala barang dimana negeri Inggeris tiada boleh seorangpun menaruh hamba melainkan semuanya mardehika, dan lagi barang siapa membeli atau menjual hamba nanti**

century text *Hikayat Pahang*, where still under Malay rule, the people are described as enjoying cock-fighting, together with all sorts of other pastimes and entertainments (Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 67).

[31] Iskandar Muda is praised in *Bustanus salatin* for instituting the same prohibitions. The Paderis also invoked such laws in the name of Wahabbi inspired reformist Islam, in the nineteenth century conflict in Minangkabau (Ricklefs, 1993: 141). The criticism of these vices in *Hikayat Merong Mahawangsa* has already been noted.

[32] Reid (1983, 33) points out that 'the decline of slavery had little to do with an increasingly sensitive moral conscience'. Rather the suppression of slavery often formed the pretext for European interventions in the region, though the same powers might take a more pragmatic view once in power. There is also the key factor that the demands of the state, with the desire for control over all its people, was less tolerant of bondage, and also 'growing numbers of landless labourers made wage labour a cheaper and more efficient system of exploitation' (Reid, 1999: 34).

> **kena hukum besar dan lagi tiada patut menyiksakan manusia begitu dibakar dengan api dan dipalu dengan tiada kira2, dan lagi sahaya ada dapat khabar ada orang membunuh orang dalam kampung Sultan, tetapi kalau sahaya dapat kenyataanya pekerjaan itu, maka dapat tiada dibunuh juga orang yang membunuh itu.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 294-295)
>
> I have received instructions from the governor-general in India that nobody, in any British settlement, may own slaves. All slaves are now free, and anyone buying or selling them will be severely punished. What is more, it is not right to inflict suffering such as branding and flogging on human beings. Further, I hear that people have been killed in your highness's compound, and if I receive full information about that, then there will be no other way than to have the perpetrators put to death. (cf. Hill, 1970: 222)

Finally the full force of British law has reached into the heart of the sultan's compound. Any previous agreement that might have been made between the Malay ruler and British officials falls by the way side, as the strength of written rules and regulations permeates down through the bureaucratic organisation of the EIC. The last humiliation comes when roads[33] being built, again on orders from India, are planned to traverse the sultan's district. At the first sign of opposition from the sultan, Crawfurd orders the walls of the royal compound to be smashed down. Using Abdullah's analogy, the implementation of the laws from Bengal reduced the Malay ruler, and with him Malay rules and traditions, to the situation of a toothless tiger.

While generally Abdullah praised justice under the British, there are several incidents which show that Abdullah was neither naive nor blinkered. It has been suggested by Carroll (1999a: 106-107), that these incidents imply that 'with the exception of Butterworth, each "raja" is, in turn, shown to be found wanting in his implementation of justice'. She argues that those British 'rajas' 'failed when it came to justice'. It is worth exploring these incidents further in order to try to understand what Abdullah intended by including them in his compositions. Was he really trying to show that the British 'rajas', with the exception of Butterworth, 'failed' when it came to justice? This is a vital question in Carroll's argument, for she believes that,

[33] Connections between the British and road building can also be seen in *Syair Tuan Hampris* (stanzas 46-50). The growing importance of roads in the Malay mind, and indeed as an indicator of wealth and prosperity is highlighted in the opening of *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar,* a poem relating events under Abu Bakar in independent Johor. In the first stanza describing the wealth of the sultanate, it is notable that roads (*Negerinya elok terlalu permai/ Jalannya bersih terlalu besar*) even come before the description of shops, the more traditional indicator of wealth (see M.A. Fawzi Basri, 1983: 62).

using *Sejarah Melayu* as a model, the notion of the fallibility of rulers gives *Hikayat Abdullah* its structure (Carroll, 1999a: 104).

Carroll highlights three incidents in order to illustrate the apparent failure of justice. Firstly, she discusses the incident involving Mr Bean, a British officer who used to mistreat young children, forcing them to enter boxing matches. From his account of the incident, it is clear that Abdullah thoroughly disapproved of the officer. What is more, the story of Mr Bean frames the account of the terror felt by the local population when confronted by staggering, drunken British sailors. Abdullah remarks that at that time he too had never seen a sober Briton, and that the fear caused by the conduct of these inebriated sailors was compounded by the behaviour of errant officers of the likes of Mr Bean. Indeed, the Malay writer expresses his surprise that Mr Farquhar did not take action over the behaviour of that official:

> **Maka heran aku, sebab Tuan Raja Farquhar menjadi Raja pada waktu itu di Melaka, tetapi didiamkannya akan segala pebuatan orang besar itu.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 71)
>
> I was astonished, because at that time Mr Farquhar became resident of Melaka, but he stayed silent concerning his official's behaviour.

This episode seems to be contrary to the declarations of Abdullah that all peoples, regardless of race, received equal treatment under British law. He uses this incident firstly to suggest that Farquhar's implementation of justice was not perfect and secondly, taken together with the rowdy and drunken behaviour of British sailors, to explain the common people's distrust of the British. Yet Abdullah argues elsewhere in the chapter that Farquhar attended to all the people whether rich or poor, carried out all necessary enquiries, and was truly generous. However, he warns that reputations can easily be damaged, and that it is reputation of which people speak. Certainly he saw the incident involving Mr Bean as potentially damaging to Farquhar's standing. However Abdullah suggests that this was just one incident, and as such it should not tarnish our understanding of Farquhar with all his exemplary characteristics.

Carroll also draws our attention to the incident involving the slave ship already referred to above. She argues that, having set the moral tone by describing the

degradation of the enslaved men, women and children, when Abdullah reported the incident to Raffles, he did nothing other than to say that slavery would be stopped eventually. However, this cannot be seen as a failure of Raffles in matters of justice. As we have seen, according to traditional Malay ideals, slavery was quite acceptable, and as such, was regulated in indigenous legal codes. Later on in the text, British regulations against slavery were indeed enforced by Raffles' successor Crawfurd. Carroll rightly states that Abdullah used the issue of the slaver's ship to present a moral message. It should perhaps be seen that he did this in order to position himself as holding the same opinion as the British, and he clearly arranged future incidents relating to slavery in his narrative to show this.

The third incident identified by Carroll (1999a: 106-107), concerns Abdullah's description of the Thian Tai Huey, and Crawfurd's reaction to Abdullah's information. She notes that Crawfurd explains that it was not possible to send a force to arrest the robbers due to the difficulty of the terrain, despite the fact that Abdullah himself had managed it. This is only part of the story, however. Abdullah himself wrote that the absence of a road meant that the British were not able to send in an armed force. Also the night after Abdullah's conversation with Crawfurd, he reports that a small force was sent against the bandits. Indeed Abdullah noted that Crawfurd did instigate the construction of such a road, though limited manpower meant that progress was slow and it was not completed. Certainly Crawfurd was not able to contain the considerable crimes of the Chinese robbers, and Abdullah argues that the British officials tolerated such disruption in the settlement because they themselves did not suffer financially from the robberies, contrary to many from the indigenous population. There is here recognition that Crawfurd was not successful in maintaining the order and security of the city. Efforts were made, though these were limited. It is a serious allegation that British officials were unaffected by the crimes and so were disinterested in preventing them. In the following chapter when Abdullah describes Crawfurd's character, he reports that the British colonel had neither the tolerance to listen to wordy complaints, nor to make full enquiries. These are perhaps the greatest criticisms he made of any British ruler. However, they pale in significance when compared with the description of Sultan Husain Shah that occurs in the same chapter.

There is nothing to suggest that the legitimacy of the regime was being called into question, even when considering the criticisms of Crawfurd's period, which after all saw the complete assertion of British power in Singapore. Rather these incidents prove that Abdullah recognises that the rulers are human; probably precisely for this reason there is no mention of *sakti* and *daulat* in his *hikayat*. The British rulers are fallible, and he describes their failings, but taken as a whole, he portrays the British rulers in a positive light. These are not incidents on a par with the mistakes and abuses of the rulers in *Sejarah Melayu*. The events described are not pegged as key transgressions, which somehow reveal a terrible truth or some dreadful foreboding. Indeed, the strength and position of the British only increases as the text progresses. Taken with his declarations in *Kisah pelayaran Abdullah*, in which he stated that he would far rather live under the British than under any Malay ruler, Abdullah's sentiments are clear.

In summary, we can see that in Abdullah's writing, traditional Malay literary concepts of justice and state ethics are still strong. Abdullah clearly has a good knowledge of a number of Malay literary texts, including *Sejarah Melayu*, of which he published an edition, and *Tajus salatin,* which he refers to and borrows from. His condemnation of justice and governance in the east coast Malay states is a criticism of the practice of Malay rulers. Abdullah is appalled by the misery caused by what he perceives as an abuse of power by the indigenous rulers. He sees the behaviour of those Malay rulers as damaging to development and economic activity. His response is to recommend the benefits to be gained from the daily consultation of *Tajus salatin*, a text imbued with Islamic ethos in its interpretation justice and governance, and virtually unaffected by indigenous pre-Islamic ideas. Thus, while Abdullah was arguing for the implementation of traditional ideas of justice, it was ideas with a strong Islamic basis that he championed. Interestingly, a number of these ideas coincided with those which were introduced by the British.

At the same time, however, Abdullah also understood that British ideas of justice and law were different from those of traditional Malay society. What sets Abdullah apart from earlier writers is his admiration for the concept, albeit theoretical, of all humans being equal under the law. Not only did he see British

justice and ideas of justice in action, but also he was apparently a party to discussions with British and European individuals regarding the principles that underpinned these ideas. The understanding of the ruler as fallible, as open to criticism, was also a significant development in Abdullah's writing. Abdullah used his work to demonstrate his considerations of Malay and British ideas of justice, both in theory and practice. He respected British rulers and, what is more, he recognised a fundamental difference in the social philosophy adhered to by rulers such as Raffles. Taken with the idea of the abolition of slavery, of which Abdullah was also a supporter, this demonstrates a fundamental shift in the understanding of the nature and function of power structures and stratification within society. The recognition that the law might be used as a powerful tool of influence, not just of the ruler upon the people, but also of the people upon the ruler, represents a determined break with the Malay tradition.

Later nineteenth and earlier twentieth century texts

Although Mohamed Salleh bin Perang was for much of his career an official in the court of the Johor sultan, serving under Abu Bakar and Ibrahim, he evidently had much respect for the British system of law and administration. At the time of writing an account of his lineage in the letter to Na Tian Piet in 1894[34], which details many of the policy issues in which he was particularly involved, he was, as Sweeney (1980b: 19) states, at the 'height of his career'. The proximity of Johor to British ruled Singapore was one of the major factors conducive to Sultan Abu Bakar's adoption of a relatively modern and pro-British approach in his administration.

> **...Raja Ahmad timangannya2 Raja Kecil menjadi residen memerintah Iskandar Puteri itu tetapi Engku Abu Bakar itu pun ada juga bersama2 mengaturkan segala alat kelengkapan membangunkan polis dan membuat undang2 yang menasabah dipakai bagi negeri yang berdekat dengan negeri orang putih itu dan mengaturkan bagaimana kaidah mengeluarkan saman warant dan sebagainya menurut bagaimana aturan yang dijalankan di dalam Singapura supaya tiada berubah perasaan orang yang masuk diam di Johor itu sama juga seperti yang biasanya dirasanya diam di negeri orang putih seperti Singapura dan Melaka.** (Sweeney, 1980c: 41)

[34] Part two in Sweeney's edition (1980b).

> Raja Ahmad – nicknamed Raja Kecil – was appointed resident to administer Iskandar Puteri [the location of government offices, BM], but Engku Abu Bakar was also there, organising supplies and equipment, establishing the police, and making laws that would be appropriate for a country which was near to a country ruled by white men, and working out the procedures for issuing warrants and summonses, all in accordance with the system used in Singapore, so that a person who came to live in Johor would not feel any different than if he was living in territory ruled over by white men, such as Singapore and Melaka.

In Salleh's writing we see no sign of regret or resentment that such a modernising approach was taken[35]. The adoption of the Singapore system is presented as a policy of expediency, which was in Johor's own interest. It is also depicted as a policy initiated by the Johor sultanate. Certainly the generally pro-British policy adopted by Johor should be seen as a factor that not only encouraged British investment in the state, but also enabled the state to maintain its relative political independence until the early twentieth century[36]. While Salleh does not directly criticise any Malay states or individuals for their conduct in matters of law and justice, he does on two occasions compliment the British for their approach when intervening in local disputes (Sweeney, 1980c: 35, 45). They are shown to carry out the correct investigations before making decisions, as would be expected according to traditional Malay conventions of kingship. Thus they are presented as operating in the 'ideal' way. While the author would never state such a view directly, it is clear from the above examples that the British were accepted and even expected to be the arbitrators for contentious issues. There is no doubt in the writer's mind that such involvement would not be fair. The stress on the proper investigations and the knowing of all the facts is also very much in alignment with traditional Malay expectations regarding the making of decisions and the dispensing of justice.

In *Syair dan ucapan Kuin*, written in 1887 to celebrate the 50th Jubilee of Queen Victoria, a very positive image of justice under the British is presented. Indeed, the longevity of Queen Victoria is seen as being a direct result of her just rule (Murtagh, 2003: 39). Later on in this *syair*, when comparing British rule in Melaka with the rule of the Dutch, Portuguese and Malays, the principal factor that distinguishes the British from their predecessors is the just nature of the rule and

[35] Similar recognition of these changes is mentioned in *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar*. This is one of the very few references to the British in this *syair*, suggesting the importance given to the incorporation of British systems of justice (M.A. Fawzi Basri, 1983: 22).

[36] See Watson Andaya and Andaya, 1982: 198-200.

application of the law. It is the fact that the British have behaved in this ideal way, looking after the people through just and appropriate dispensation of the law, that Melaka has, according to the author, been returned to the ideal state:

Kepada Inggris pula beralih	Then came the turn of the British
Baharulah negeri menjadi puleh	Only then was the country restored
Hukumnya tidak berdaleh2	Their law was not evasive and woolly
Menuju ke adil seboleh2.	They aimed to be as just as possible.

(Murtagh, 2003: 41)

The author's preference for the British judicial system is further expounded in a number of verses, the verse below being a typical example:

Kalau dibezakan jauhlah sangat	If compared the difference is great
Seumpama cili dengan pengat[37]	Like that between chilli and a sweetmeat
Hukumnya Inggrislah yang bersemangat	The law of the British is full of vitality
Yang lainnya itu bengisnya bangat[38]**.**	Those others were hasty in cruelties.

(Murtagh, 2003: 41)

The idea that is being stressed here is not that the British brought any particularly new system of justice and law to the Malay world. The language used to describe the attributes of the British system is similar to that discussed in the opening section of this chapter, looking at traditional Malay ideas of justice and governance[39]. It is the failure of those that went before, Europeans and Malays, that is the object of criticism. Certainly, while our knowledge of the author of this poem is limited, it is reasonably safe to presume that he was pro-British, and certainly would be unlikely to publish a

[37] A sweetmeat made of fruit soaked in coconut milk.

[38] If there was a Javanese influence *bangat* or *banget* might alternatively mean 'very' or 'exceedingly' (Winstedt, 1965 :31).

[39] In other poems written on the occasions of jubilees and coronations, similar language regarding the qualities of the British ruler is to be found. In the anonymous poem celebrating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, among the eulogistic stanzas is found the following couplet; *akal bicara sempurna iman / hukumnya adil lagi dermawan* (Intelligent in investigations pure in faith / Her laws are just, also charitable). In *Syair King George yang ke-5,* when recounting the speeches made by various local dignitaries, the author Mohamed Arifin does record the praising of the just nature of the distant ruler: *Ke raja Inggeris adil berdaulat* (To the British King, just and with God given power). The crucial link between justice and God given authority is also made in the poems celebrating Queen Victoria's Jubilee. In the anonymous poem we are told that Queen Victoria's God given power overflows (*berdaulat bertambah limpah*), and also that she is fortunate (*Baginda itu raja bertuah).* Similarly, in *Syair dan ucapan Kuin* there are several allusions to the Queen's God given power (*daulatnya tinggi).* In the *Jubilee address by the Perak Rakyat,* the just qualities of Queen Victoria are also referred to repeatedly. For example: *Memerintahkan negeri maha adilnya* (Ruling over the country with great justice).

poem critical of the British monarch. What is more revealing is that the author actually makes the criticism not just of previous European powers, but also of the Melaka sultanate. The author of this poem is not suggesting that the system of justice introduced by the British was particularly innovative. Indeed the British system of justice and rule was understood in terms of the expectations of the traditional Malay society. What was different about the British according to this author was that they actually ruled in full accordance with those conventions, in contrast with the Dutch, Portuguese and Malays themselves.

In *Syair Tuan Hampris,* a poem focusing on the career of J.L. Humphreys, the British adviser in Trengganu (1915-1925), the British official is ascribed with many of the qualities and characteristics one would expect of a traditional Malay ruler. However it is noticeable that he is not portrayed as having the quality of being just (*adil*). This is in contrast with the Malay Sultan Zainal Abidin, ruler of Trengganu prior to Humphreys' era, whom the *syair*'s author Hajah Wok Aisyah does present as being just and generous (*adil dan murah).* Humphreys is linked with numerous improvements in the state, mainly to do with infrastructure, and in connection with these changes, the author notes that many of the old traditions were changed (*adat dahulu banyak ditukari*) with the coming of the adviser. While Humphreys was only the adviser to the raja, the administration of Trengganu is accredited to Humphreys (*tadbir Terengganu punya penasihat*). In addition to the infrastructural changes affecting roads, market, and forest clearing, definite allusion is also made to the changes in marriage laws, such that all marriages had to be officially reported. The author represents these changes as bringing great advantage particularly to women, whether they be marrying for the first time or widows (*kerana aturan sudah berpindah/ janda dan dara senang bernikah).* The changes to laws regarding marriage are used to illustrate the benefit brought by a variety of laws introduced (*sekalian aturan memberi faedah*), and as should be the case with the making of laws according to traditional Malay ideals, the changes brought peace to the state, and as such were well received by the population at large (*mengamankan negeri sekalian rata/ patut menerima kasihlah kita*). Thus, in terms of style and language, the characterisation of Humphreys has much in common with traditional Malay conventions. However, the nature of the innovations introduced by the British adviser was far from conventional.

The changes that Humphreys instituted are recognised for the benefits they brought to the general population, and for the consequent happiness they induced.

The '*Jubilee Address by the Perak rakyat*' also echoes *Syair Tuan Hampris* since it gives a sympathetic portrayal of the changes and improvements made to the law as a result of the British resident's[40] advice to the Malay raja in Perak:

Dikhabarkan adat memerintahkan negeri	Ways to rule over the country were told [by Low]
Beberapa nasihat pula diajari	Various advice was also given
Dengan aturan hukuman diberi	With the orders and laws that were made
Jaga pelihara sebilang hari.	To guard and protect [the country] daily.
Segala raja2 orang besarnya	All the rajas and the nobles
Penghulu dan rakyat tentaranya	The chiefs and the army
Dijalankan hukuman di dalam undangan	Carried out the laws and regulations
Selamat sempurna sekalian tempatnya	Everywhere was safe and secure.

While it is the raja who may be officially implementing the changes in the law, this section clearly shows that none other than the British adviser is recognised by the Malay poet as being the instigator of such changes. The result of such advice and innovation in the laws of the country ensure security and peace in the state.

In *Hikayat Pahang*, a text dating from the 1930's, just as in *Syair Tuan Hampris,* there is no direct characterisation of British individuals as being just (*adil*). However, it should also be noted that the sultan himself is not accredited with this quality in the part of the *hikayat* that relates events of the period of British involvement.

An important episode in the *hikayat* describes the period immediately prior to accepting a formal British presence in Pahang. According to the Malay chronicle, the decision was not unanimous and there was a considerable variety of opinion. One of the concerns related to the relationship with Johor, also under British protection. The scene recounting the advice given by the sultan of Johor is illuminating:

[40] Sir Hugh Low.

> **'Lebih baiklah disain kerana tiada apa-apa perbezaan di antara Johor dengan Pahang. Bersama-sama kita harap di bawah naungan yang keadilan.'** (Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 106).
>
> 'It would be better to sign, for there are no differences between Johor and Pahang. Together we will hope to be under protection which is just.'

The key point that the Johor sultan chooses to push in encouraging Pahang to accept British advances is the supposedly just nature of the protection offered (*keadilan*). The importance of law to the British, in the eyes of the Malay author, is also revealed in the description of events immediately following the acceptance of the British and the coming of the resident, Mr Rodger[41]. Having pointed out that Mr Rodger was already accustomed with matters of Malay governance, the author described the British resident returning to Singapore almost as soon as he had arrived and shown due respect to the sultan. The reason for the journey back to Singapore is entirely explained by the demands of governance:

> **Maka kemudian daripada itu, Tuan Rodger pun memohon hendak balik di Singapura dahulu kerana hendak membuat sekalian jenis buku peraturan negeri yang akan dipakai, dijalankan oleh kerajaan negeri Pahang. ... Tuan Rodger baliklah ke Pahang membawa sekalian buku-buku dan undang-undang serta askar, mata-mata Sikh menjagakan negeri Pahang.** (Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 110)
>
> After that, Mr Rodger requested to return to Singapore immediately because he wanted to make all the types of books of state regulations which would be used, and put into action by the state of Pahang. ... Mr Rodger returned to Pahang bringing all the books and legal texts, along with soldiers and Sikh policemen to guard the state of Pahang.

It is significant that the author chooses to highlight the variety of books and codes introduced to the state by Rodger. Moreover, *Hikayat Pahang* does put considerable emphasis on the co-operation between the British resident and a Malay prince, Tengku Mahmud[42], in the introduction and implementation of the new legal system:

> **Darihal Yang Mulia Tengku Mahmud menjalankan pekerjaan negeri bersama-sama Tuan Rodger di Pekan, banyaklah peraturan negeri yang sudah dijalankannya dengan beberapa usahanya.** (Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 112)

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[41] The first British resident in Pahang, John Pickersgill Rodger, was appointed in October 1888, though it was not until July 1889 that full administration was assumed (Linehan, 1936: 127).

[42] Tengku Mahmud was the sultan's eldest son, and had been appointed regent in July 1889 by his father. See Linehan (1936: 127-138) for full details on this initial period of the protectorate.

> His Excellency Tengku Mahmud carried out the work of the state together with Mr Rodger in Pekan. There were numerous state regulations which were put into action by them with a great deal of effort.

There is no attempt to represent the new laws simply as a remodelling of existing laws and traditions. It is acknowledged that the system of laws being introduced came from outside of Pahang. This is emphasised further when the author hailed the extraordinary intellect of the Malay regent, Tengku Mahmud, and praises his ability to fully understand and pay due attention to the British laws (*sekalian peraturan undang-undang Inggeris)* introduced by Rodger. The text also emphasises how the two men establish courts and a police force throughout the state (*membuat court dan polis*), though it is noticeable that no mention of actual laws introduced is included at this point. In particular, the key laws introduced for the regulation and suppression of slavery are not described, even though a later incident in *Hikayat Pahang* involving a rebellion led by a number of Malay chiefs was linked to this issue. One reason for this apparent omission might lie in the nature of this text as a court chronicle. As a work written with the primary purpose of legitimising and strengthening the sultan it is not perhaps surprising that laws which might be seen as specifically serving to reduce the authority of the institution of the sultan, should have been omitted. Certainly the task was not made any easier by the unavoidable presence of the British.

The texts discussed in this section clearly show that Abdullah's views of British justice did not find a direct continuation. The idea of equality, which he welcomed enthusiastically, is not evident in the above works. Nonetheless, there is still much in common with the patterns so far seen in this chapter. In the jubilee texts and also the work of Mohd Salleh bin Perang, the qualities of justice and statesmanship remarked upon are generally those which are admired in traditional literature. In one of the poems celebrating Queen Victoria's reign, she is not only characterised in accordance with traditional Malay conventions, but she is seen as heralding a realisation of ideals that according to the author have not been achieved either under previous European rulers or, most importantly, under the Malay sultans.

Hikayat Pahang and *Syair Tuan Hampris* are interesting for the more complex and nuanced portrayal of the relationship between Malays and British. In *Hikayat Pahang,* the role of the Malay sultan and his entourage is stressed and the British

representative is depicted as working very much in partnership with the Malays. Importantly, however, it is stressed how new legal ideas were brought in from Singapore. In stressing the benefits that various legislation and regulations brought to the people as a whole, we can detect something of a development from the model of traditional Malay ethics described in the first part of this chapter. As might be expected, it is noticeable also that there is clear recognition of the function of British representatives as being very much that of advisers, and with a particular remit. Much of the language that might be used to describe a traditional ruler, in terms of justice and statesmanship, is certainly not ascribed to these servants of the British Crown. While the British are seen as being part of the political structure, it is quite clear that in the eyes of these particular Malay authors, the true holders of power are the Malay sultans.

An opposite view of British justice

Two poems noted for their criticism of the British are *Syair dagang berjual beli* and *Syair potong gaji*. The poems were apparently written by someone of the name Tuan Simi, but no other certain details of the author are known. As Muhammad Haji Salleh argues, the author shows particular knowledge of trade involving Bugis, Malays and Chinese, and also of the conditions of workers paid by the EIC (Muhammad Haji Salleh, 1994: 8)[43].

In the opening quatrains of *Syair dagang berjual beli*, the author describes a world in which all the conventions are being turned upside down. It is now a world where traders rule the city, a sure sign that the world is ending (*sekarang saudagar memerintah negeri/ tandanya dunia sudahlah akhiri*). Furthermore, tradition and law are in disarray *(adat dan perintah sekalian tersenget)*. *Syair dagang berjual beli* tells the story of a Malay trader who is treated unfairly by a Chinese merchant and goes to the British for justice. The trader gives a letter to the Chinese who has wronged him,

[43] Little is known about Tuan Simi. Perhaps one profitable line of investigation might relate to the mention of a Tuan Sami, the *syahbandar* in Singapore, in the *Tuhfat al-nafis*. The mention of this name comes soon after reference to the Anglo-Dutch treaty of 1824, and prior to a specific date equivalent to March 1828. Thus the dating for Tuan Sami would fit with the likely writing of these poems in the 1830's or maybe a little earlier (Muhammad Haji Salleh, 1994: 6).

calling him to go to the police and warning that 'he who is in the wrong will pay the penalty because the men in the court house apply the law perfectly' (*siapa yang salah, siapa yang kena/ tuan-tuan di sanalah hukumnya sempurna*). Indeed we are also told of the advice the Malay received from a British trader, that he should go to the police so that the case might be brought before the three magistrates and investigated according to the written law (*boleh diperiksa dihukum ditulis/ tuan-tuan bertiga yang duduk di majlis*). Thus, the first part of this *syair* focuses on the attempts by the Malay trader to be treated fairly in a rapidly changing world, governed by the rules of trade. Many references are made to the system of justice operated by the British and all concerned, including the Malay trader, have every expectation that justice will be done.

It is in the closing verses of the poem that the reality of the situation comes to the fore. The Malay trader wins the case, and the Chinese merchant is told by the judge that he has done wrong. However, it emerges that all the talk of the fairness of the British justice system is indeed a sham:

Khabarnya orang putih adil bicara	It is said that the white men are just in their deliberations
Mengukum memeriksa tidak bercidera	Flawless in their investigations and application of law
Baharulah ini kita ketara	Now however we are clear
Rupanya sekalian hukum pura-pura.	It seems all this law is a pretence.

(Muhammad Haji Salleh, 1994: 46)

For while the Malay wins the case, the Chinese is allowed to pay him back in goods and not in money, and no time limit is put on the order for repayment. Thus, the Chinese, having been found guilty, leaves the court feigning upset but with a happy heart, while the Malay is forced to show satisfaction while still wounded inside.

This poem can be seen as a warning that the old ideas of trade and honesty have disappeared, and that on no account should one trust another trader by giving over one's goods without receiving payment directly. Clearly the author is imploring Malays and Bugis to learn these new rules, if they are to succeed in this new market. The fact remains that the British are the main players in trade. It is the British who buy the goods from the Chinese and Indian traders, and in the end their ultimate

agenda is profit. Thus, while perhaps the immediate problems described in this poem are caused by the Chinese and Indian traders, the British authorities are being criticised for their failure to live up to their reputation for being just and fair. The rights of the Malays are being compromised and abused due to the British prioritising trade and profits over fairness and justice for all.

In *Syair potong gaji* the author Tuan Simi presents a similarly negative impression of the British system of justice and government. In the opening stanzas of the *syair,* Tuan Simi ironically presents the governor-general in Bengal as an ideal Malay ruler, with the fame, respect and reputation one would expect, the power of the ruler stretching over many lands. However, it is a governor-general whose government is now very different. The impact of the rule from Bengal is felt by all in Singapore as described in the fourth stanza of the *syair*:

Mendatangkan perintah dari Benggala	The system of government came from Bengal
Di atas kita sekalian segala	Over all of us
Selaku api yang amat menyala	Like a fiercely burning fire
Membakarkan hati tidak berkala.	Burning our hearts endlessly.

(Muhammad Haji Salleh, 1994: 49)

Whereas in *Syair dagang berjual beli* the criticism is less direct, in *Syair potong gaji* the blame is firmly and resolutely laid at the feet of the British administration. As with the previous poem, there is the strong idea of the world order having changed dramatically, a world which, as is revealed towards the end of the poem, has been parched dry, with the rulers and great men of old having lost all authority. The effect of the change is to create a Singapore that exploits and causes hardship to the workers in the city. The motif of the 'sick' state made well, that has been discussed in respect of *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* (Murtagh, 2002), is reversed in the imagery of this poem, with the warning that the hardship brought upon the local population by the new system is causing pain (*kesusahan yang datang atas kami orang/ sakitnya bukan-bukan lagi sebarang*).

In this second poem of Tuan Simi, while there is no actual attack on the application of justice as is the case in *Syair dagang berjual beli,* the British are blamed for the problems experienced by Malay workers. It is their system of rule,

imported from Bengal, that allows such conditions of exploitation. There is no mention of middlemen in this poem, either Chinese or Indian, unlike in Tuan Simi's other poem, where it could be argued that the system was being abused by these rapacious middlemen at the expense of the Malays and Bugis. Rather the criticism is unequivocally directed at the British.

Thus, in these two texts a view very much contrary to the majority of texts looked at is expressed, though as with Abdullah, the description of Singapore is one of a society working to new rules, with parallel ideas of order being turned upside down. In *Syair dagang berjual beli,* the author's expectation is that the Malay traders and workers should be getting a fair deal under the law. They should be treated equally. This is the theoretical idea behind the concept of British justice, and is recognised as such. It is the reality of the situation that is contentious. The British system of justice, failed to deliver according to ideal notions. Though certainly, judging from the travelogue of Abdullah, there is no reason to assume that the lot of a Malay trader would have been any better under a Malay sultan. The other key factor in this text is the stressing of difference and inequality on ethnic grounds. There is a feeling that the Malays in particular are being hard done by in British Singapore.

In *Syair potong gaji,* the criticism of the British is even more direct. While the idea that manual workers under the British in the 1830's would be suffering hardship is no great surprise, the hardship of the people is of course a topic that only tends to arise in traditional Malay literature when referring to the situation in rival states or past rulers. For this reason the author is particularly unusual. He clearly had no allegiance to the British rulers, and as such his poetry is special not just for the fact that it does not come from a court, whether Malay or European, but rather because it truly derives from the city. What is more, the group being represented and the values being argued for are also new in Malay literature, for it is the position and the rights and expectations of disempowered Malay workers and traders that are being championed.

Conclusion

As the discussion of the selection of texts above shows, a number of developments and changes can be identified with respect to Malay ideas of justice from the late eighteenth century through to the early part of the twentieth century. However these changes and developments were not constant or continuous. Clearly writers from different political situations and different geographical locations responded according to their local circumstances. There are also quite evident continuities from the period prior to British political power in the region. In addition, it might be argued that this chapter also substantiates the idea of a re-emergence or strengthening of certain concepts, linguistic formulae and genres.

It is clear from the traditional Malay model of justice that there was no concept of equality before the law, and indeed even before God; there were different expectations of different strata of society. Contrastingly, a number of texts which consider justice under the British show authorial understandings of justice and society that have diverged significantly from this traditional model. The recognition and appreciation of a system of justice where the ruler can be judged on earth by his own people, even if only in theory, is a significant one. So too is the increasing stress on the changes that were made and the regulations that were introduced for the good of the people. This is an idea that was certainly present previously, but seems to have become more pronounced in certain texts.

Prohibitions introduced by the British are recorded in a whole variety of texts, generally in a very positive way. These measures included restrictions on the carrying of firearms and weapons, gambling, particularly cock-fighting, and the consumption of opium. Slavery was abolished and there were also measures taken against piracy. The right to carry *keris* was seen as part of Malay culture, as the sultan in Singapore informed the British governor. Abdullah describes opposition to the prohibition on wearing the *keris* as coming from the royal household in Singapore. The *keris* is portrayed by Abdullah as being symbolic of traditional customs, suited to life in the forest, but not appropriate for urban Singapore. Similarly in other texts the prohibitions on firearms are presented as contributing to the security and subsequent

flourishing of the new urban centres. Prohibitions relating to opium and gambling, while perhaps contrary to Malay *adat,* were certainly in accordance with Islamic law. Positive responses by Malay authors to such moves by the British certainly suggest support for these laws, but such support does not necessarily equate to a statement of support for the British system itself. Restrictions and prohibitions of slavery were perhaps the most contentious and fundamental changes referred to by Malay authors. While historians such as Reid have argued that the apparently moral stance of the European nations regarding slavery actually had underlying economic causes, certainly Abdullah seems to understand the new ideas on slavery as reflecting different approaches to the idea of equality before the law for individuals of different rank.

While various authors wrote positively regarding judicial and legal changes brought about by the British, others, particularly in those eulogistic works praising British monarchs, used genre forms and language clearly influenced by traditional Malay court literature. One explanation for this continuity might lie in those particular Malay authors reacting to and understanding these British rulers and monarchs in the same terms as their predecessors had understood their Malay rulers. This would certainly seem to be the case with Lauddin's portrayal of British justice in *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* and also in the account of justice under the British in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi.* However, with those texts from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, even when ideas in society were beginning to change, certain authors continued to use literary conventions and genres in a similar way that they were apparently used two or three hundred years before. It may also be the case that the continued use of particular literary language to portray those British rulers represents something of a desire for the continuity of Malay values and ethics of justice. This argument might be taken one step further to suggest that these poems are an expression of the desire for a return to the glory of the supposed golden age of Malay sultanates, albeit with a non-Malay ruler. Probably more realistic is to see these poems as part of the last gasp of a particular literary language and style, struggling to adjust to the new reality of not just the British, but of the changing social and consequently literary situation.

Obvious questions arise as to the validity of taking the expressions of these particular authors as evidence of the views of the population as a whole. Certainly there is no question that the majority of authors of the above texts, came from specific sections of the population. The majority of texts with known authors were written by individuals close to the ruling elite. Hence, it is only continuing with the pattern of traditional Malay literature, that those authors connected with the court would write texts that praised and strengthened their rulers.

The only obvious exception to these positive responses to British systems of justice is the poems of Tuan Simi, though as has been discussed in this chapter there are other instances from other writers which might also be seen as demonstrating resistance to British rule and British ideas of justice.

It is in the works of Tuan Simi that we clearly see something greater than mere 'glimmers of resistance'. As has been noted, these works are particular, not just for their content, but also for who wrote them. These are not the works of a court scribe, noble, or even teacher, but they are apparently the work of a port official, somewhat distant from the centre of authority, but very much at the centre of the new burgeoning city. Rather than see his role as to uphold or represent a ruling power, he instead saw himself as representing a specific section of the community. It is the voice of this subaltern that comes through in his works. It is also notable in these texts that Tuan Simi specifically differentiates between local Malays and non-Malays, portraying other races, particularly the Chinese, in a most detrimental and threatening light. The idea of ethnic disharmony, and the application of justice serving to aggravate this inequality, is apparently particular to this author in the nineteenth century. His texts surely represent some of the earliest examples of Malays describing their loss of social and economic power to other ethnic groups.

One might argue that Ahmad Rijaluddin's *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* can be interpreted as showing 'glimmers of resistance', arguing for the rights of the indigenous Indian elites over the British colonisers. The example of the inattention of the European rulers to justice in Bengal, until it came directly to affect them, might be seen in that light. While it might be understood that Ahmad purposefully highlights

the bad practice of the British, and the consequent resistance of the Indian elite in not keeping the colonial power properly informed, to show the non-compliance of the local population in a positive light, it is perhaps more likely that we should see the behaviour of the Indian nawabs in the same light as the behaviour of Sultan Alauddin's official who failed to maintain order in Melaka. If anything, it is the failure of the Indian officials to behave appropriately that is actually the subject of observation and criticism.

Abdullah might too be interpreted as showing ideas of resistance to British ideas of justice in calling for wayward Malay sultans to consult *Tajus salatin.* As Fanon has argued the return to the traditions of old, the reawakening of indigenous traditions can be seen as the first step in the struggle of a people against colonial oppression. But Abdullah's argument does not champion the ideas contained within *Tajus salatin* over British forms of justice and governance. Rather he seems to be arguing that for a Malay sultan to rule properly he should rule according to the ideals contained within that text. However for the situation in the Straits Settlements, where the Malay sultan had been stripped of any real power, Abdullah is clear in his preference for the new system introduced by the British, though as has been noted, many British innovations were commensurate with Islamic legal ideas. Abdullah highlighted certain failings of British rulers and officials with regard to their judicial duties. But rather than criticisms of the British, these remarks were a recognition of difficulties in the exercising of justice and the fallibility of individuals.

We know from *Tajus salatin* that non-Muslim rulers could be considered just in the Malay Islamic tradition. Therefore there was certainly a theoretical allowance for such an eventuality. Also it should be remembered that foreigners, or non-Malays, had long played key roles in the governance of Malay states. The most obvious example is Melaka where the *bendahara* are known to have come from Southern India. Thus, when looking at the place of these foreign advisers in *Hikayat Pahang* and *Syair Tuan Hampris,* in some respects they might be seen as carrying on a long held tradition of Malay courts. However, the crucial difference is that the function of these British advisers is portrayed as being much more limited than that of their Indian predecessors. For this reason *Hikayat Pahang* in particular is interesting for its

showing the situation in the Malay court in the early twentieth century. For while *Hikayat Pahang* belongs to the genre of court chronicle and as such can be seen as looking back to indigenous traditions, it is also a text that incorporates into its content the swiftly changing reality, while still championing the supremacy of the Malay sultanate. From this point of view, in its presentation of justice and the organisation of the state, *Hikayat Pahang* takes a perspective that is much more progressive than Abdullah's call to look back to *Tajus salatin*. Rather *Hikayat Pahang* narrates the history of a sultanate that sees its survival and rejuvenation in the accommodation of these new forces into an existing state structure. The approach of *Hikayat Pahang*'s author, in presenting this particular picture of the British impact on governance in Pahang, is not just a naive attempt to seek solace in the past. Rather it should be seen as evidence of a reaffirmation of Malay strengths and as showing very tentative and careful glimpses of resistance to British colonial rule.

CHAPTER FIVE

MALAY LITERARY PORTRAYALS OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

In his discussion of indigenous reactions to the Western presence in Southeast Asia, Reid (1999: 263) cites education as one of the main items that attracted the attention of those whom he terms as 'borrowers', those individuals or cultures that sought to 'beat the West at its own game' by 'borrowing' from aspects of the Western cultures that dominated Southeast Asia. Certainly a Western education, whether received in Southeast Asia or in the metropoles, is well recognised as a stimulus for many of the region's early nationalists in the first part of the twentieth century. However, as will be discussed in this chapter, Western ideas of education began to influence and affect traditional Malay notions of the purpose, value, and make up of education from quite early on in the nineteenth century. Thus the first part of this chapter will discuss ideas of education as presented in traditional Malay texts from the period prior to the arrival of the British, followed by a discussion of how those ideas continue or change in those texts which are connected with the British. Linked with education is the reception of new ideas, both abstract and concrete, and therefore the second concern of this chapter will be to discuss first how innovation and technology were portrayed in Malay literary works, and then, following on from this, to discuss the Malay association of technology and innovation with the British.

Education in traditional Malay literature

There are various references to education in traditional Malay literature, though generally they are formulaic and somewhat vague. Given the court-centric nature of much of the extant written literature, these passing mentions tend to relate to

the education of kings, princes and heroes. In addition to these general references, there is also a small number of texts, which contain specific descriptions relating to education, learning and literacy.

Sparing representations of learning are to be found in a large number of texts. For example, in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* (Winstedt, 1966: 1), Khojah Maimun, already being of good disposition (*baik budi pekerti*) and wise (*bijaksana*), is surrendered to a *mualim* in order to learn to recite the Quran. After some time Khojah Maimun knew how to recite (*tahulah mengaji*), with a most fluent tongue (*terlalu fasih lidahnya*), and had also acquired much knowledge (*ilmu*). Another brief and formulaic example of an individual's education is to be found in *Hikayat Indraputra:*

> **Hatta setelah berapa lamanya maka anakanda baginda Indraputra pun besarlah, maka disuruhkan baginda kepada mualim disuruh ajar mengaji. Setelah berapa lamanya kira-kira tujuh tahun umur Indraputra, maka Indraputra pun tahulah mengaji Quran.** (Mulyadi, 1983: 51)
>
> After some time, Indraputra was sent by His Majesty to a *mualim* who was ordered to teach him to learn to recite the Quran. After some time, when Indraputra was around seven years of age, he knew how to recite the Quran.

We can see similar descriptions, albeit in a slightly more elaborate form, in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*. In the following extract Hang Tuah's father, prior to his temporary leave, gives instructions to his wife as to how to care for their son:

> **'Adapun anak kita ini peliharakan baik-baik, jangan diberi bermain jauh, kerana ia sangat nakal. Hendak kusuruhkan mengaji kerana mualim tiada; lagipun ia tiada tahu bahasa.'** (Kassim Ahmad, 1975: 20)
>
> 'Look after our child well, don't allow him to play far away, because he is very naughty. I would like to send him to learn to read the Quran, but there is no *mualim* [here], what is more he does not know manners.'

Simple and sparing as it is, this extract mentions the two most important aspects of education. As well as religious instruction, generally in the form of learning to recite the Quran, there is the stress on *bahasa*. In its narrow sense *bahasa* means language, but more broadly - and this is probably implied by Hang Tuah's father – this word also incorporates such connotations as manners and breeding.

More in-depth descriptions of the nature of learning and the styles of teaching do not normally occur in traditional Malay *belle lettres*. However a more detailed understanding of education and learning can be drawn from more overtly didactic genres, thus the remainder of this discussion will focus on certain sections from *Tajus salatin*, *Hikayat Isma Yatim*, *Hikayat anak pengajian* and *Syair Mekah dan Madinah*.

The importance of education in a child's upbringing is expounded in a specific chapter of *Tajus salatin*. This chapter, which is concerned with the care of children, gives us glimpses as to the perceived role of education in traditional Malay society, together with its ideal content. Using Quranic quotations as the starting point for his chapter, Bukhari explains that the child has six rights which must be looked after by the father. After the initial obligations of washing the child and shaving him, there are various other prescriptions:

> **Apabila sampai budak itu pada enam tahun dikhatankan dan sucikan nyawa budak itu dan mengajari dia adab dan sopan dan namai dia dengan nama yang baik. Hak yang keempat apabila sampai budak itu pada tujuh tahun lainkan tempat tidurnya dan mengajar akan dia peri sembahyang. Hak yang kelima apabila sampai budak itu pada tiga belas tahun disuruh budak itu sembahyang dan jikalau ia meninggalkan sembahyang itu menyekatkan ia. Hak yang keenam apabila sampai budak itu pada enam atau tujuh belas tahun berikan bini padanya.** (Roorda van Eysinga, 1827: 161)
>
> When the boy reaches six years he should be circumcised and his soul should be cleansed. Teach him civility and manners (*adab* dan *sopan*) and give him a good name. The fourth right, is that when the boy reaches seven years he should be given his own bed and taught the words of the prayers. The fifth right is that when he reaches thirteen years, the boy should be ordered to pray and if he neglects his prayers, cajole him. The sixth right is when the boy reaches sixteen or seventeen years, he should be given a wife.

From this concise summation of the key responsibilities in bringing up a child, the main obligations which can be categorised as falling into the realm of education proper are the religious obligation to learn prayers, together with the obligation to teach manners and civility. In these non-religious obligations the stress is on learning to operate within, and be respectful of, the traditions and conventions of society. As is quite apparent, the ideal upbringing described in this chapter of *Tajus salatin* is very much in tune with what we read in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, *Hikayat Indraputra* and *Hikayat Bayan Budiman*. Moreover, this ideal upbringing coincides with two aspects

of traditional Islamic education generally, namely the study of *adab* (civility) and *'ilm* (the sciences, mostly religious).

Adab[1]

Braginsky (1998: 302) has commented that *adab* literature was less widespread in traditional Malay society than it was in the Middle East. The reference to *adab* in *Tajus salatin,* with its obvious Persian influences, is therefore not so surprising given the importance of *adab* literature in the Middle East. However, considering the obvious links of *Tajus salatin* with Middle-Eastern and in particular Persian literature, it cannot alone be taken as evidence for the central role of the teaching of *adab* in the Malay world. A traditional Malay text that is fairly close to the *adab* genre is *Hikayat Isma Yatim*[2]. The opening of this text, with its particularly didactic style does much to develop our understanding of the ideal requirements of an educated person (Braginsky, 2005: 401). The *hikayat*'s author, Ismail, tells us that in addition to soothing the heart[3], the purpose of his *hikayat* is to give lessons in *tata susila* (moral behaviour), to decorate the reader's speech with beautiful aphorisms and to facilitate the giving of answers to difficult questions, based on appropriate precedent:

> **Ketahui olehmu, hai segala mereka itu yang membaca hikayat ini, yang empat perkara faedah dalamnya. Pertama, jikalau ada turut seperti kata dalamnya hikayat – isyarat namanya, dan kedua, jikalau berkata-kata di hadapan majlis maka disebutkan riwayat ini – ibarat namanya, dan ketiganya perkara, jikalau ditanya oleh segala raja-raja pada hal kata yang musykil maka berdatang sembah, 'Ya tuanku syah alam, demikian patik dengar di dalam hikayat'-ceritera namanya, dan keempat perkara, jikalau didengar oleh segala orang**

[1] The meaning of *adab* is complex. Winstedt (1965: 8) defines *adab* as 'courtesy, manners' though definition of *peradaban* as 'culture' implies the greater breadth that the term *adab* can cover. Wilkinson (1932: vol.1, 4) gives a more complete definition: 'Breeding; culture; courtesy. Etym. *adab* represents a training in the humanities in contrast to *ilmu* or solid learning ... In Malaya it is used of good breeding generally; or with a further distinction between *adab* (courtesy to one's equals) and *tertib* (deference to one's superiors)'. In the Middle East, *adab* 'came to imply the sum of knowledge which makes a man courteous and "urbane"' (Gabrieli, 1960: 175). It incorporated profane knowledge rather than *'ilm,* or religious learning. In addition to its more general meaning of humanity or culture, *adab* can also mean the appropriate general culture for particular official ranks, for example of viziers. A particularly full understanding of *adab* in the Malay sense is revealed in the introduction of *Hikayat Isma Yatim* discussed below. For more on *adab* see Goldziher (1913), Gabrieli (1960) and Pellat (1964).

[2] Written by a certain Ismail. Braginsky suggests that the text was probably composed around the mid-seventeenth century (1998: 302).

[3] A general function of fantastic adventure *hikayat* (see Braginsky, 1998: 200-204).

> **yang masyghul menjadi suka hatinya – hikayat namanya.** (Roorda van Eysinga, 1821: 1-2)
>
> All of you who read this *hikayat* should know that there are four types of benefit in it. Firstly, if you behave according to the words in the *hikayat* – these are signs; and secondly, if speaking in front of an assembly mention these stories, these are known as aphorisms; and thirdly, if asked by princes about a difficult problem you should reply 'Yes my lord, this is how I have heard in a *hikayat*', these are known as stories; and fourthly, if all the people who are sad hear something and they become happy – that is known as a *hikayat*.

These instructions are of particular importance in the *adab* tradition, for through poetic fragments, the words of sages, and a variety of edifying stories, there was 'cultivated in the reader that combination of moral, social and intellectual qualities which were essential in a man of refined culture, enabling his intellect to reveal itself freely and spontaneously in all kinds of different situations' (Braginsky, 2001: 187). Thus the development of these qualities were seen as being of great importance in the upbringing of educated, cultured men.

Our understanding of learning and teaching is further enhanced by the few pages of *Hikayat Isma Yatim* which tell the story of Isma Yatim's life as a writer. After some time Isma Yatim was surrendered by his parents to a Sufi teacher (*mualim Sufian*) in order to learn to read (*mengaji*[4]) and to write (*menyurat*). Isma Yatim's reason for writing *hikayat* was in order that children would gain benefit from knowing and reading his stories. Thus, in explaining his reason for writing *Hikayat Isma Yatim,* the benefits to be gained from reading the text are stressed. Further on, the text narrates that, when the prime minister read the *hikayat*, not only did he gain much delight from it, but also his intellect (*akal*) grew. Thus the main benefit to be gained from these various components of *adab* can be seen as the heightening and growth of the intellect, the only thing that made people truly human according to Islamic (and not only Islamic) ideas (Braginsky, 1998: 301).

Also useful in *Hikayat Isma Yatim* is a short section describing the daily routine of the Prince Indra Mempelai, who in addition to having all the ideal physical

[4] *Mengaji* has a specific meaning relating to the study of religion, particularly to read and recite the Quran. However, as in this example from *Hikayat Isma Yatim,* it can also have a broader meaning of reading generally.

qualities was well educated and pious. Ismail portrays him as an ideal expert in both *'ilm* (Mal. *ilmu*) and *adab*. First we learn that:

> **Sebermula baginda itu terlalu alim kepada membaca Quran, dan tafsir dan kitab dan fikah, istemewa hikayat bagai-bagai diketahuinya.** (Roorda van Eysinga, 1821: 172)
>
> The prince was most knowledgeable in his reading of the Quran, Quranic commentaries, *kitab* and legal texts. In particular he knew various *hikayat*.

Then follows a description of the morning activity of the prince, which was to be attended by the *ulama*, scholars and experts in law, together with all the princes, war chiefs and ministers. At such assemblies the prince read aloud the Quran, religious commentaries and other books. Then he would question the scholars about various aspects of religion, particularly about deeds that were obligatory *(fardu)* and those that were commendable *(sunat)*, and he discussed the concepts of deeds that were allowed *(halal)* and those which were forbidden *(haram)*[5]. Other activities in the prince's day, each with their particular dress requirements, were more clearly related to *adab*. They included discussions on how to increase the greatness and distinction of the kingdom, racing horses, and finally, at the end of the day, entertainments of music and poetry (*zikir, madah, syair*).

That Malay texts would be read communally is well known and indeed such activities are referred to, at least superficially, in various Malay literary works. Perhaps the most elaborate and realistic description of the reading of *hikayat* at the time of *majlis* (assembly), similar to that of the Prince Indera Mempelai, is to be found in the preface to *Hikayat anak pengajian* ('Tales for children who study the Quran'), a text composed by a Jakarta scribe, Safirin bin Usman Fadli (Braginsky, 2002: 43)[6]. The preface considers the possible benefits and dangers of listening to

[5] *Adapun tatkala hari maka baginda memakai pakaian pandita daripada serban, dan jubat, dan serual, dan sebai, maka baginda pun duduk di balai masjid membaca Qur'an dan tafsir dan kitab dihadap oleh segala pandita, ulama, fakih, alim-mutaalim, dan segala anak raja-raja, dan para menteri, dan hulubalang. Maka baginda pun bertanya akan suatu masalah kitab kepada segala pandita mengatakan fardu dan sunat, dan mengatakan halal dan haram, dan mengatakan wajib, jair(?)/jaiz(?), mustahil. Setelah sudah baginda bertanya itu, maka dipersembahkan oleh segala pandita, maka beberapa pula soal dan jawab yang musykil-musykil ditanyakan baginda, maka segala pandita itu pun heran akan ilmu anak raja itu* (Roorda van Eysinga, 1821: 172-3).

[6] The preface to the text, together with its slightly abridged translation, is included in Braginsky, 2002.

hikayat. Safirin warns of the possible danger of being overwhelmed with passionate longing and love when listening to a *hikayat*. Also many *hikayat* contain untrue and false stories, which can be harmful. Essentially, the person who has intellect (*akal*), i.e. one who has studied and has a good comprehension of *adab,* will be able to carefully distinguish between literary texts, reading only those from which he can gain benefit and purposefully avoiding those which are potentially dangerous. Drawing on Abdullah's introduction to *Hikayat panca tanderan,* Safirin bin Usman Fadli uses the metaphor of the various temptations in a garden to demonstrate the differences in approach towards reading a *hikayat*. While the stupid man may be attracted to parts of the *hikayat* which constitute lies and go against religion, and be swayed simply by the melody of the recitation, the intelligent man will select carefully from the *hikayat* in order to maximise the benefit:

> **Jikalau ada yang baik maknanya dan yang patut ibaratnya dan pantas nasihatnya, maka diambilnyalah pada hatinya dan disimpannyalah seperti menyimpan harta benda yang besar harganya...** (Braginsky, 2002: 52)
>
> If there are meanings which are good, and appropriate expressions (or parables; BM), and proper advice, then they should be taken into the heart, and stored there as if storing possessions of great value...

Thus just as in *Hikayat Isma Yatim*, the idea of remembering and storing aphorisms, exemplary stories and meanings, so that they can be used and drawn upon by the man of intellect, is stressed in this opening section of *Hikayat anak pengajian.*

Closely linked to the idea of education and scholarship is the chapter on scribes (*penyurat*) in *Tajus salatin*. This chapter (chapter 11) includes quotations from the Quran and the *Kitab al-insan*[7] to show that the two mightiest forces in the world are the pen and the sword, and that indeed the pen is the mightier of the two. This conclusion is based on several assertions. Firstly, the first thing created by Allah was the pen. Secondly, all men who have knowledge state that of everything created by Allah, the greatest is the pen, for all knowledge from the beginning to the end would never be gained were it not for the pen. Thirdly, all deeds in the world stand on two instruments, the pen and the sword, however while all that is done with the sword can

[7] It is possible that this text did not actually exist, for all Bukhari's quotations that are supposedly taken from this text can be found in Al-Ghazali's *Nasihat al-muluk* (Braginsky, 2005: 432-3).

be achieved with the pen, all that can be achieved with the pen cannot be done with the sword. Fourthly, it is only through referring to books and letters and the pen that man can know all the ways of the world, for otherwise things would be forgotten. Thus it is through the pen and the book that the knowledge of mankind increases. It is stated in the *Kitab al-insan* that the work of the writer is as enjoyable as that of the ruler, because the writer speaks through the tongue of kings and guards all the secrets of kings. Bukhari states that the writer should have a very broad and extensive knowledge, encompassing such topics as irrigation, astronomy and astrology.

Thus several ideas related to educational values are evident from this chapter on scribes. A high value is obviously put on literacy. The importance of the written record is emphasised, for it gives foundation to and facilitates the collective memory of a society. As with other sections of the text where it is suggested that rulers should either read *Tajus salatin* or have it read to them, there is an understanding in this section that the ruler might not be fully literate, hence the importance of the scribe or copyist in supporting the work of the ruler. Perhaps most interesting is the requirement that the scribe should have a good knowledge of scientific subjects. Bukhari does not simply stress the importance of the scribe and the written record for its role in governance and maintenance of tradition, but there is also a stress on knowing everything that can be known, which also extends to the sciences.

Ilmu

From *Hikayat Isma Yatim*, *Tajus salatin* and *Hikayat anak pengajian* we mostly know about the learning of profane disciplines of *adab*. By way of contrast, *Syair Mekah dan Madinah*[8] provides us with some idea of how religious disciplines, *ilmu*, were studied. The poem tells of the author's experiences and impressions of Mecca and Medina, on the occasion of his pilgrimage in the 1830's. One particular section of the poem details the opportunities for learning available in Mecca. Syekh Daud introduces the section by informing the audience that he will 'tell about the pursuit of knowledge' (*menuntut ilmu aku khabarkan*). Unsurprisingly Mecca is

[8] *Syair Mekah dan Madinah* was written by the Minangkabau Syekh Daud of Sunur, a poet and *ulama* who went on the hajj to Mecca in the 1830's.

described as a place in which teachers are in abundance, and knowledge is imparted like monsoon rain:

Negeri Makkah bilad al-ma'mur	In the city of Mecca the land of prosperity
Beberapa dalamnya ulama yang masyhur	There are numerous famous *ulama*
Mengajarkan ilmu bagai hujan timur	Their teaching of knowledge is like the monsoon rains
Mereka mendengar tunduk tafakur[9].	Those listening have heads bowed deep in thought.

Teaching is described as taking place in the mornings and evenings after *subuh*, *zuhur* and *'isya* prayers. With the picture of an abundance of students, the teacher is described as taking centre stage, with students coiled around him (*syekh di tengah murid melingkar*). There are a number of subjects of study mentioned including *ilmu Arab* (Arabic), *ilmu nahu* (grammar), *ilmu kari* (the Quranic readings), *ilmu fikah* (Islamic jurisprudence), *ilmu mantik* (logic), *ilmu ma'ni* (an aspect of rhetoric), *ilmu usul* (knowledge of the tenets of Islam), *ilmu tasauf* (mysticism), *ilmu tafsir* (interpretation of the Quran) and *ilmu hadis* (traditions about the Prophet). The subject matter, particularly relating to mysticism, is discussed at some length. There is also a division made between right and wrong teaching, with the warning that there is much teaching that is not correct (*ilmu yang salah banyak sekarang*). Notable in the description of the various teachers and teachings, is the emphasis on memorisation. In addition to the author's expression of admiration for the blind teachers who had memorised all the books, the author also suggests that the audience would be astonished to see the students memorising whole books by process of repetition (*hafaz dimulut semuhanya kitab*). This emphasis on memorisation is somewhat counterbalanced, however, by several instances where understanding (*paham*) is stressed.

Mystical learning, while included in the above discussion in *Syair Mekah dan Madinah,* should be recognised as an important aspect of the learning of many heroes in traditional Malay literature. Mystical learning is the aspect of the study of *ilmu* that is most frequently mentioned, and many useful examples of such learning are found

[9] All excerpts of *Syair Mekah dan Madinah* are from pp. 31-40 of RUL MS Cod. Or. 12161 (Ophuijzen 39).

in *Hikayat Syah Mardan*[10]. The introduction to this *hikayat* tells us of Syah Mardan's religious learning in the form of study of the Quran, and also his more humanistic learning in terms of fighting skills (*permainan senjata*) and magical knowledge (*ilmu hikmat*). Syah Mardan then left his father to study under a Brahman knowledgeable in mysticism (*ilmu hikmat nazar*). *Hikayat Syah Mahdan*, which can be read as a Sufi allegory (Braginsky, 1990b), includes many question and answer sessions on various mystical topics[11]. While these sections do not show how such ideas would be taught, they certainly demonstrate the ideal range and extent of mystical knowledge that might be expected. Mystical learning is also an aspect of Hang Tuah's early upbringing. Having been educated in religion, and manners and conduct (*bahasa*), the hero and his four friends travelled to a hill to study with Aria Putera. They 'went to have a teacher' (*pergi berguru*), and clearly from the description, the relationship between pupil and teacher was more that of a child to a father or even of a servant to master. The topics studied by Hang Tuah were *ilmu isyarat hulubalang* (war magic), *firasat* (physiognomy) and *ilmu penjurit* (martial arts) (Kassim Ahmad, 1975: 28).

From descriptions of mystical learning we also know about techniques of teaching. Correct attitudes of teachers towards pupils and *vice versa* have been described in Malay literature. Syeikh Abdur Rauf's *Syuruth Asy-syeikh wa al-murid* (see Mohd. Shaghir Abdullah, 1991: 83-91) gives lists of various stipulations and codes of conduct (*syarat dan adab)* for both student and teacher. For example, pupils were advised not to waste their lives by being lazy, to do everything instructed by their teacher, including difficult tasks as well as easy ones and not to do anything that would betray their teacher. Teachers were advised neither to allow their pupils to visit other teachers, nor to mix with the pupils of other teachers. However if a teacher realised he was falling in the estimation of the student, then that student should be expelled from the school. Central to learning was the process of memorisation. Students would be expected to memorise texts[12], as the basis for further study when

[10] Also known as *Hikayat Syeikh Mardan*. Editions of the text, which most likely dates from the early seventeenth century (Braginsky, 1988: 109), have been prepared by an anonymous scholar for the publisher Fajar Bakti (1994) and Zabedah Abdullah (2000).

[11] See for example the conversation between Indera Jaya and Syeikh Luqman al-Hakim (Zabedah Abdullah, 2000: 21-26).

[12] The process of learning by memorisation has been discussed by Johns (1975). Johns quotes Ibrahim al-Kurani writing in the late seventeenth century on the basis of the account of his Malay disciples: 'when a child grows up, Allah bestows upon him the light for their [the texts'] complete understanding,

increasingly complex explanations and commentaries would be added as students became more advanced in their understanding (Johns, 1975: 50). Teachers divided students into three categories. Students at the beginning of their mystical learning were known as *orang mubtadi,* intermediate students were known as *orang mutawasitah,* while advanced students, or adepts, were known as *orang muntahi*[13]. Certain books and reading material were deemed appropriate for each category[14].

Summary

Thus having drawn on a variety of traditional Malay sources, some consistent ideas relating to education can be identified. The stress on the two types of education described in *Tajus salatin,* emphasising the learning of *adab,* that is manners and civility, and *ilmu* including religion, and notably mystical learning, is a two-fold attitude to learning evident in many traditional Malay texts. In particular from works of religious scholars we know of the importance of memorisation in traditional learning, and in particular the understanding of, and respect for, the written word. Mystical learning, and the nature of the almost familial relationship of the pupil and teacher is also a recurring motif in a variety of texts. The importance of the concept of *adab* in our understanding of Malay ideals of well-educated and cultured individuals is marked. With its emphasis on correct language, aphorisms and exemplary stories, literature itself played an essential role in that education. However while learning from literature is emphasised, and fine speech is also a virtue, there is no mention of the need to actually study the Malay language, and this stands in contrast to the various references to the studying of Arabic language and grammar.

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and this is not hard for him, since he already knows the expressions in which the texts are reproduced, because he has learnt them by heart' (1975: 50). Thus the process of learning involved first memorising texts by heart, followed by interpretation and commentary.

[13] This division is described at some length in Abd as-Samad of Palembang's *Sair as-salikin* (the 'path of seekers') (see Bruinessen, 1995: 71-87).

[14] Extant reading lists for students allow a fairly detailed understanding of the content and scope of mystical learning. For example, Abd as-Samad of Palembang's listed those bookes he considered most useful, categorised into three sections depending on the level of the student (see Bruinessen, 1995: 71-87).

Education and the British

Malay texts considering British concepts of education are not particularly numerous. Most prominent are the works of Abdullah, in particular *Hikayat Abdullah* and *Kisah pelayaran Abdullah,* in which their author frequently considers issues of education. They are the only texts within this survey that give overt consideration to the nature of education under the British. However interesting sections are also to be found in texts such as *Syair Tuan Hampris* and *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor,* in which traditional ideas of education are still clearly evident, albeit influenced by the changing realities and impact of British rule on the Malay states in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Abdullah on education

Abdullah's picture of his own education tells us much about his attitude towards learning generally[15]. While Abdullah often paints himself as a poor man, his education was not typical for Malays, as he well knew, neither in the length of his studies, nor in the subject matter itself. Abdullah first describes his Quran studies, how he learnt to read and to copy the Arabic script until he was almost word perfect in reading the Quran. He also describes the punishments he would receive from his teachers almost as a matter of routine, though he seems to see such punishments in a positive light, describing strikes of the cane as lamps to guide him, and each slap he received as a pair of spectacles for his eyes. Once his Quranic study was complete, he was sent by his father to learn Tamil, which he studied for two and a half years, as was the custom for the children of good and well-to-do Tamil families in Melaka. He then learnt to write Malay from his father. Thus he progressed to make a living from the copying of the Quran, and he also started to learn Hindi from the Indian Sepoys in Melaka. After his father told him to practice reading texts written in the Malay language, he soon began work writing Malay letters and receipts for payment. As Abdullah tells us, at that time there were only six men in Melaka who did such letter writing, only two of whom he describes as *anak2 Melayu* (Malays), as opposed to *Keling (*people of Indian descent). He specifically states that he was unique as a

[15] See Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 18-46.

young man at that time for learning to read and write in Malay, and certainly there was no school where Malay could be studied, only Arabic. We are also informed of the two foreign teachers under whom Abdullah studied in his early days, a sheikh from Yemen, under whom he studied the Quran, learning afresh to recite according to the sheikh's rules, and also under a Hadramaut Arab, with whom he studied Islamic doctrines, using Malay language manuscripts.

Thus, as Abdullah himself recognised, his education was far from the regular education that would be received in Melaka at the time. As the son of a well-to-do family he studied Tamil in addition to the obligatory Arabic. But he also learnt Hindi, and uniquely he studied and gained an excellent grasp of written, as well as spoken, Malay[16]. He then also went on to learn English, much to the initial upset of his family. As Carroll (1999a: 103,121) suggests, his support of the punishment/reward system of learning seems to be a championing of the Malay system, which is later criticised by Raffles[17]. However, the other criticism that Raffles makes when visiting the school of Lebai Abdul Razak is that the Malays do not study their own language, and this is a point that Abdullah agrees with, having already shown that his own education was exceptional[18].

Abdullah's works are particularly noteworthy for the strong opinions that the author expresses concerning what he sees as deficiencies in conceptions of the purpose of education in the Malay world, and in particular the disadvantage that the Malays suffer as a result. His observations on the unjust nature of the Pahang rulers in his *Kisah pelayaran Abdullah* highlight various strains of his thinking concerning good rule, education, innovation and modernisation:

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[16] Abdullah's first language was certainly Malay, but that does not necessarily mean that he understood himself as being a Malay. He often seems to set himself apart from Malays, and certainly stresses his Indian ancestry. The question of how Abdullah understood his identity has been much discussed, though with some disagreement. While some argue that Abdullah saw himself as a Malay writing for the Malays (for example Carroll, 1999a), others have seen Abdullah as more of an outsider (Traill, 1979; Matheson, 1979; Ras ,1985). See also Vickers, 1997.

[17] See Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 80-81. Though Raffles' criticism did seem to be withdrawn once an explanation for the punishments had been given by the Malay teacher.

[18] Indeed if we accept the view that Abdullah did not see himself as a Malay, but rather as an outsider, we do not even have to view his education as exceptional for a Malay, but rather as different from the norms characteristic for Malay society.

> **Maka adalah dalam fikiran sahaya yang bodoh lagi yang tiada mempunyai ilmu ini, jikalau kekal adat dan pekerjaan dan kelakuan yang telah tersebut itu, maka dapat tiada lama-kelamaannya kelak sunyi dan rusak juga negeri Pahang, sebab mereka itu sekalian mengaku dirinya saja pandai. Adapun sebabnya fikiran itu datang kerana tiada mereka itu mahu menurut adat orang, lagipun tiada ia mempunyai ilmu, menjadi makin sehari makin bodohnya bertambah, seperti katak di bawah tempurung, adanya; maka adalah pada sangka katak itu tempurung itulah langit.** (Kassim Ahmad, 1981: 15)
>
> In my humble and ignorant opinion, if such customs and practices as I have mentioned continue into the future, the state of Pahang will be ruined and end up as a desert, because they think it is only they themselves who are clever. They think the way they do, because they will not follow the customs of others, furthermore they are not educated, and so their foolishness ever increases. They are like the frog under the coconut shell; in the opinion of the frog, the coconut shell is the sky.

As has already been observed in the previous chapter, Abdullah identifies education or the lack of it, as the source of many of the Malays' ills. Feudalism, corruption and obsession with ceremonial rather than substance are seen by Abdullah as being consequences of a poor education. Abdullah observes that the elite in Pahang are reluctant to follow or incorporate the ideas and customs of others. This might be interpreted as implying a reluctance to follow the ways of the British. However, from his recommendation that Tengku Temena should consult the *Tajus salatin*, we know that Abdullah's ideas were not so straightforward. Abdullah certainly embraced new ideas, and it is a fact that many of the new ideas that confronted him in colonial Singapore came from the British, but he also cherished aspects of the existing Malay culture, and indeed regretted that they were not better understood and used by the Malays themselves. Thus Abdullah had no time for those who like the frog under the coconut shell, either ignored or refused to enter into a dialogue with the wider world. Even with respect to existing aspects of Malay culture, he felt that in many cases these could be modified in response to the challenges of new ideas from beyond the Malay world.

The prime example of Abdullah's argument for Malay culture to respond to the new demands of the modern world can be seen in his attitude to the Malay language. As a teacher of Malay to foreigners, Abdullah was convinced of the importance of learning language[19]. Abdullah's chief contention was that the Malays

[19] Various scholars have considered Abdullah's views on education, in particular the influence of Western missionaries on his beliefs, notably Hill (1970), Hashim bin Musa (1993) and Carroll (1999a; 1999b).

did not study Malay. At the beginning of the second volume of his *hikayat,* he takes the example of the Arabs, the British, the Chinese and the Indians and argues that those four races have become civilised and powerful, because of their ability to read and write and understand their own language. Note should be taken of the countries or peoples that Abdullah highlights and perhaps aspires to. Britain is included in that list, but so too are Asian nations. Thus, Abdullah sees the study of one's own language as essential if a society is to become truly civilised, an idea which is not actually so novel for Malay society, if we remember the introduction to *Hikayat Isma Yatim.* Indeed Abdullah urges the student of Malay to become familiar with Malay literature, because of the variety of its linguistic features. While noting that much of the content is more fiction than fact, he urges the student to choose and select carefully in order to gain maximum benefit[20]. However he also stresses the importance of not just reading and copying, but rather of understanding. Indeed he states that those who read without understanding gain no profit, and as a result are not able to write anything new and useful, they are only able 'to imitate' (*meniru-niru*) that which already exists.

A key factor that set Abdullah apart from many of his contemporaries, was his recognition of the value of printing and higher levels of literacy. He was witness to the literate and paper-based administration of the colonial government, and thus realised that the study of language had to meet these new demands and as such could no longer be based simply on the memorising of fine words and exemplary stories heard orally. Rather, the new society which he saw as represented by the British, required levels of literacy so far unknown in the Malay world, and that in turn required the study of grammar and of the language in its written form. The importance of the change in attitude to literacy, and its link with a changing perception of the role of education, has been argued strongly by Tan Chin Kwang (1986) in his article on the influence of the social and educational background on Malay literary development. Tan argues that the development from oral/aural to a literate text-based society was an unusually long process in the Malay world. The reason for the slow development is identified by Tan as resulting from the disinclination of the two main groups in Malay society, the *rakyat* (commoners) and the *golongan bangsawan*

[20] This is an idea which Abdullah probably first wrote of in his introduction to *Hikayat panca tanderan* (1985, iv-vi). He uses exactly the same analogy of the mendicant in the garden faced with a tremendous variety of fruits and flowers, as is used in *Hikayat Isma Yatim* and *Tajus salatin.*

(aristocratic group), towards secular education. Many of the ideas expressed by Tan come across in Abdullah's *hikayat* and the lack of enthusiasm of the two separate groups for secular learning is quite apparent from the following two examples. Regarding the commoners, Abdullah noted the reluctance of the Malays in Melaka to study English, as they feared that by doing so, their own culture and most importantly their own religion would be threatened. This attitude was no doubt strengthened by the role of missionaries in providing the apparently secular education[21]. Abdullah wrote:

> **Maka oleh sebab bodohnya dan sangka mereka itu nanti dimasukkan Inggeris, tiadalah ia mau datang. Karena pikiran mereka itu, dengan kekerasan nanti ditangkap dimasukkan Inggeris. Maka beberapa kali sudah aku ingatkan akan mereka itu serta memberi tau akan mereka itu, bahwa 'Sekali2 tiada Inggeris itu hendak memasukkan seseorang ke dalam agamanya kalau yang empunya diri tiada suka. Melainkan supaya kamu boleh belajar dan mengetahui bahasa kamu dan bahasa Inggeris'.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 149)
>
> But because of their ignorance and their belief that they would be introduced to British ways, they did not want to come [to the school]. They thought that they would be compelled by force to embrace Christianity. I frequently reminded them [to come], telling them, 'The British do not have the slightest intention of converting anyone to Christianity, if the individual does not want it. Rather they want you to study and to understand your own language and English.' (cf. Hill: 1970: 114)

In addition to their own doubts regarding these new educational opportunities, the general population, who like in any traditional society would be used to following the guidance of the ruling elite, got no inspiration to use these opportunities from the upper stratum of Malay society. Abdullah describes the example of Raffles' offer to send the sultan's children to India to be educated. Raffles was apparently keen to encourage a more Western style of learning among the upper echelons of Malay society under the premise that their lack of education was responsible for their lack of participation in trade. In response to the sultan's negative reaction, Abdullah reports Raffles as giving the following retort:

> **'Apa sahaya boleh buat lagi, dengan seboleh2nya sahaya mau melihat kebajikan atas orang Melayu. Maka jikalau Sultan tiada mau, itu Sultan punya rugi. Kemudian kelak itu anak nanti menjadi seperti akal dan kelakuan raja2 Melayu juga adnya.'** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 227)

[21] Interestingly Abdullah uses the phrase *masuk Inggeris*, in the same way as *masuk Melayu* is used, with the implication that just as to be Malay means to be Muslim and therefore one could 'become' Malay, so too one could become British by learning the language and, one presumes, taking on the religion associated with the British by the Malays, Christianity.

> 'What more can I do? Truly I wish to see to the welfare of the Malay people. But if your Highness does not wish it, it is your Highness's loss, and later your Highness's son may grow up to have the same intelligence and behaviour as the other Malay rulers.' (cf. Hill, 1970: 158)

Aligning himself with the British administrator's position, Abdullah then adds his own comments concerning those who do not want to develop their own learning:

> **Maka jikalau kiranya sudahlah dihantarkan oleh sultan serta tumenggung akan anak2 mereka itu seperti kehendak Tuan Raffles itu, maka sampai sekarang ini nescaya layaklah ia telah menerima pangkat bapanya itu, lagipun tiadalah canggung ia dalam barang pekerjaan dunia ini, maka bukannya yang seperti ada engkau lihat sekarang ini seperti sepohon kayu dalam hutan, barang di mana ditiup angin, ke sanalah ia cenderung.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 228)
>
> If the sultan and the temenggong had let their children go as Mr Raffles wished, they would by now already have reached the same ranks as their fathers, what is more they would not be out of touch with the affairs of this world. They would not be as you see them now, like a tree in the forest bowed by every wind that blows. (cf. Hill, 1970: 159)

We might also read into Abdullah's comment the suggestion that it was lack of education that was not only holding the Malays back within the current status quo, but that it was also diminishing their opportunity to take a more steadfast position in the events and changes being witnessed by the Malay world. In such examples of Abdullah's writing, similarities with the writing of Tuan Simi resonate. The position of Malays *vis à vis* other ethnic groups is threatened as a result of a variety of disadvantages which are linked to changing norms and conventions of the evolving urban environment.

Abdullah also considered that his learning enabled him to review many of the traditional beliefs of those living around him. His writing on superstitions is typical:

> **Syahadan, adalah kebanyakan bangsa orang yang disebelah sini yang percaya berbagai2 jenis perkara yang bukan2 ... Maka dahulu akupun percaya akan sekalian itu serta takut. Sebab dari pada kecilku telah menengar akan perkara itu serta orang2 membuat takut. Datangnya sekalian itu dari pada orang tua2. Akan tetapi semenjak aku telah mendapat pelajaran dan akal sedikit2 serta membaca kitab2, tamabahan pula telah bercampur2 dengan orang yang berakal, yaitu orang putih, maka bahwasanya kuketahuilah seklaian itu bohong lagipun penipu yang besar adanya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 138)

> There are many races in these parts who believe in all kinds of impossible things ... Once even I believed such things, being afraid of them, because ever since my childhood I had heard of these matters and people had tried to frighten me. But they are all old wives' tales. Since I have gained knowledge and a little wisdom and have read books, and particularly since I have associated with intelligent people like the white men, then I have come to know that all these beliefs are lies and nothing more than a great deceit. (cf. Hill, 1970: 108)

Particularly in *Hikayat Abdullah*, but also in some of his other writings, Abdullah strives to set himself apart from a whole variety of ideas and values that he indicates are held by the general population. The above section involves Abdullah railing against a variety of popular belief and superstitions and he goes on to argue that indeed these various old wives' tales are contrary to Islam. Two important observations can be drawn from this example. Firstly, Abdullah is putting his faith in books, the written text, rather than old wives' tales. Secondly he is drawing on what he sees as the superior intellect of white men. Certainly it seems to be somewhat paradoxical that Abdullah is reassessing the acceptability of certain beliefs in Islam in the light of knowledge introduced by non-Muslims. However the main shift in Abdullah's thinking, undoubtedly provoked by the dialogue he enters into with ideas held by the British, is the shift to the championing of modern ideas. His rejection of folk beliefs is not on the basis that they are Malay, but because they do not appear to be rational. Those traditional beliefs are not supported by the scientific knowledge that Abdullah has been able to access through his encounter with books conveying these new ideas[22] and also with Europeans, who, he understood, generally thought and behaved in accordance with these ideas.

Texts from the later nineteenth and early twentieth centuries

Na Tian Piet's description of the education of Sultan Abu Bakar in *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor* is particularly interesting for the fact that the sultan's teacher was Mr Keasberry[23]. While Na Tian Piet's poetry

[22] Including the translation of factual European texts.

[23] Benjamin Keasberry (1811-75) had been a merchant in Singapore and also worked for a company in Batavia, before turning to missionary work. After stints in Java and America he returned to Singapore in 1839, where he joined the London Missionary Society. When the London Missionary Society moved to China, he stayed on in the Malay world, opening a school for Malay students on River Valley Road in Singapore; for more detail on Keasberry, see Murray (1921: 237-8).

tends to be somewhat clichéd and repetitive, we can nonetheless gain an insight into the author's understanding of the British teacher's work:

Besar lah soeda doeli Beginda	When His majesty had grown up
Diserakan mengadji oleh aijanda	His father handed him over for study
Toean Keasberrij goeroe nja ada	Mr Keasberry was his teacher
Soerat Enggris diadjar nja soeda.	He had already taught him English.
Goeroe Beginda itoe Toean Pandita	His Majesty's teacher was a fine scholar
Kepada Beginda sangat ditjinta	He greatly loved His Majesty
Seperti boea hati tjaija mata	Like a beloved, the light of his eye
Radjin diadjar soedalah njata.	It is clear that he taught him most diligently.
Apa hilmoe nja didalam dada	The knowledge that was inside his soul
Dibri nja segala kepada Beginda	All of it was given to His Majesty
Segala hilmoe nja brapa jang ada	All the knowledge that he held
Kepada Beginda dibri nja soeda.	It has all been given to his Majesty.
Segala hilmoe soeda diadjarkan	All the knowledge has been taught
Kepada Beginda soeda dibrikan	It has been given to His Majesty
Segala adjaran Beginda fahamkan	All the lessons His Majesty understood
Segala nja itoe soeda di afalkan.	Everything has been memorised.
Segala hilmoe soeda dibri	All the knowledge was given
Begimana hadat memerenta negri	How was the law for ruling the country
Segala soeda beginda adjari	All of it was taught to His Majesty
Menjadi lah beginda arif bistari.	Such that His Majesty became wise and accomplished.

(Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 321)

Na Tian Piet clearly praises the British teacher as a highly educated, respectable and diligent teacher, as is only fitting of the Johor sultan[24]. Similarly to what we have seen in earlier traditional Malay literature, the learning process involves the teacher giving over all that he knows for it to be stored in the soul of the student. Interestingly, the line which tells us that the royal student had understood all his lessons is followed by, and seemingly clarified with, a line telling us that everything had been memorised.

[24] Abdullah gives an account of how Keasberry came to be the teacher of Sultan Abu Bakar in *Hikayat Abdullah* (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 411-3). Abdullah writes that the then Tungku Abu Bakar and his brother were placed in Keasberry's school by their father the temenggong, on the suggestion of Governor Butterworth. Abdullah saw this as a highly important event, for the students would study both English and Malay. Mohamed Salleh bin Perang also studied at Keasberry's school, and writes that he 'studied English and Malay letters for over two years, by which time, through the grace of God, I had acquired a grasp of Malay reading and writing, and all the arithmetic; but my understanding of English letters was still inadequate, because during the period I was studying Malay, I only spent two hours a day on English.' (Sweeney, 1980b: 76-77).

The overwhelming impression is that the function of learning is to embrace an existing and previously held knowledge.

The above quote, which gives an account of the sultan's education, follows soon after detailing the date of birth of the future sultan. According to the formula set out in *Tajus salatin*, the education should have taken two forms, sacred and profane. However there is no mention whatsoever of the young prince's religious learning, though much later in the poem there are various descriptions of Sultan Abu Bakar as a great and pious Islamic ruler. In this respect then, the use of the word *mengaji* is notably alluding to non-religious learning. Rather than more traditional education relating to Islam and *adab*, the study of English is emphasised. There are numerous references throughout the poem to the sultan's abilities in English, with a stress on both reading and writing (*Pandei lah Beginda Enggris bahasa / toelis dan batja samoa nja bisa*). This accomplishment in English is portrayed as a factor enabling the sultan to mix easily with Britons (*sama orang Enggris sangat biasa*). The high value placed by the author on Britain, is further evident in the detailing of the large number of British individuals in the sultan's service. A number were schoolteachers, noted for their teaching of English (*surat Inggeris diajarnya pula).* In addition to other unnamed occupations, Britons also took positions as doctors, pharmacists and the head of the post office[25].

Interestingly in the section describing the death of Keasberry, Na Tian Piet also credits the teacher with teaching the Arabic script in addition to Latin characters:

Hoeroef Enggris dia adjar bermoela	He started by teaching English script
Hoeroef Arab di adjar nja poela	He also taught Arabic script
Doea roepa soerat di adjar nja segala	These two forms of letter he taught them both
Banjak moerid nja soeda fahamla.	Many of his pupils now understand them.

[25] A similar idea of the importance of having Europeans in service is expressed by Mohamed Ibrahim, in his description of Klang, though his explanation for the reason of this is perhaps a little more realistic and adds to our understanding of the variety of functions performed by Europeans in the Malay world: 'The strength of the settlement was in several Europeans, drifters, who having failed to get work in Singapore had been employed by the tengku as officers of his sepoys.' ('*Maka kekuatan negeri itu adalah beberapa orang2 putih yang hanyut2 dan yang tiada dapat pekerjaan dalam Singapura digaji oleh tengku itu dijadikan kepala2 supai masing2...*'; Muhamed Ibrahim Munsyi, 1956: 45).

Banjaklah moerid nja yang mengarti	Numerous are his pupils who understand
Soerat Malaijoe dan soerat orang poeti	Both Malay and white man's letters
Brapa ratoes yang soeda ada brenti	Several hundred have concluded [their classes]
Bahasa Enggris pandeilah pasti.	Of course they are skilled in English.

(Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 329)

Thus remembering Abdullah's calls for an education system that included the Malay language, Na Tian Piet certainly sees fit to remark that such learning was provided.

Another view on education can be gleaned from the way of introducing the two main characters in *Syair Tuan Hampris,* Mr Humphreys and the Sultan of Trengganu, Zainal Abidin. First of all Mr Humphreys is introduced:

Tuan tu konon bahasa Inggeris	The gentleman was knowledgeable of English
Di tanah Eropah sangatlah arif	In Europe he was very wise
Namanya itu Tuan Hampris	His name was Mr Humphreys
Elok parasnya serta menjelis.	His looks were beautiful and handsome.
Pelajarannya konon di universiti	It is said he studied at university
Oxford bernama kampungnya pasti	Oxford was undoubtedly the name of the town
Di sanalah ilmu berganti-ganti	There [teachers] exchanged their knowledge [with students]
Tempat pelajaran akal pekerti.	That was the place to study [how to refine] one's character.
Ada pun tuan muda yang handal	The gentleman was young and trusty
Berbahasa Melayu harum tak janggal	He spoke Malay sweetly not discordantly
Terlebih daripada Melayu asal	Better than native Malay speakers
Perkataannya halus lagi berfasal.	His speech was refined and coherent.
Halus bahasanya tiada terperi	His manners were indescribably sophisticated
Payah dilawan sukar dicari	Difficult to oppose, hard to find
Patutlah jadi pegawai negeri	He was ideal as a civil servant
Wakil kerajaan ke sana ke mari.	A deputy of the state in various places.
Lemah lembut barang lakunya	His behaviour was gentle
Halus manis tutur katanya	His enunciation was refined and sweet
Patutlah rupa dengan namanya	His appearance was appropriate for his name
Sekalian memuji orang padanya.	Everyone praised him.

(Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1983: 45-46)

In the above stanzas, the naming of Oxford University, apparently famous enough as a place of learning to be deserving of mention in a Malay poem, might suggest to the audience an education different from traditional Malay conventions. However the verses that follow, describing the British official's fine manners, skill with language

and gentle behaviour are almost perfectly in accordance with the characteristics of *adab* learning. It is these characteristics that lead the author to declare a little later that Humphreys is 'wise and perfect in intellect' (*akalnya arif lagi sempurna).* Such refinements would of course be essential qualities for an official in a Malay court, and so we should not perhaps be surprised that the Malay author ascribes these traits to an administrator under the British empire who was also, it should not be forgotten, an adviser to a Malay sultan.

The account of the learning of the previous sultan, Zainal-Abidin, stands in some contrast to the British administrator's education. He is portrayed as a great sultan, ruling over various dependencies, and of course he is just and generous. However what is emphasised in this case is the religious nature of his education:

Rajanya alim lagi jauhari	This king was pious and expert
Kitab Quran sangat pelajari	He has studied the Quran in great depth
Alimnya tidak lagi terperi	His learning is incomparable
Termasyhurlah khabar ke sana ke mari.	Its fame had spread in all directions.

(Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1983:46)

While references to study of the Quran are not unusual, the depth of the sultan's Islamic learning is further stressed by observing his 'understanding of Arabic sciences' (*cukup fahamnya ilmu Arabiyyah*) and also his knowledge of astronomy (*baginda nan gemar ilmu falakiah*). What is more, the short eulogy to Sultan Zainal Abidin concludes with a description of his pilgrimage to Mecca, as well as his visit to Egypt, another centre of Islamic learning in the early twentieth century.

The description of the education and knowledge of the two men make for an interesting comparison. On the one hand there is the British administrator, educated at Oxford University, skilled in the Malay language with attributes and qualities clearly indicative of traditional *adab* learning. On the other hand, there is the Malay sultan, knowledgeable of his religion, educated in Arabic sciences and astronomy, and travelling not just to perform the *hajj* but also to visit Egypt. Qualities linked with more profane kinds of learning are absent; there is no mention of the sultan's fine features, excellent manners or refined language as we might normally expect. While the sultan had the necessary qualities to be a leader in the highly important field of

religion, Humphreys has all the skill necessary for a Malay official. Indeed this division of skills and knowledge perfectly reflects the expectations and demands of rule under the British, where under the terms first set out in the Pangkor Treaty, religion and *adat* remained the domain of the sultan, while other fields of governance fell under the British adviser. Sultan Zainal Abidin was of course ruler prior to the period of official British involvement in Trengganu, and thus this division was not actually in place during his reign. Nonetheless, it might be argued that later events have affected the scope of the attributes that the author associates with the Malay sultan.

Conclusion

The discussion of Malay literary understanding of British approaches to education has highlighted various conflicting strands. The importance of refinement in manners and language, so essential in traditional society is still very much evident. Even Abdullah, while captivated by Western styles of learning and science, was highly appreciative of these more traditional attributes in a number of British officials. However, even in the more traditional portrayals, for example Hajah Wok Aisyah's portrayal of Mr Humphreys, the goal posts have shifted. The adviser is praised for his learning, but also his understanding, and his Western *alma mater* is deemed worthy of mention. In Na Tian Piet's work, Sultan Abu Bakar is endowed with all the regular attributes befitting of an illustrious monarch, although when it comes to his learning, it is his knowledge of English that matters rather than Arabic. However the style of learning described, with the absorption of all that the teacher has to offer and the stress on memorisation rather than understanding, creates the image of a teacher-pupil relationship very much in the mould of traditional Malay concepts.

Tan argues that for the 'tradition-bound' Malays the impetus for a change in attitudes to literacy had to come from an external source. While in the case of the Malays that external source was the British, they too initially only saw education as important for the Malay elite. With the Malays largely illiterate, a key role was played by the Malays of the Indian (*darah keturunan Keling*) and Arab (*darah keterunan Arab*) descent, whom Tan sees as filling the gap of a nascent middle class in the Straits Settlements. It was representatives of these groups that were employed as

translators and interpreters by the British, and who were engaged as Malay language teachers by European traders and colonialists. As Tan (1986: 106) argues the relationship between these groups and the larger Malay society was ambivalent, and the former were slightly separated from the latter. This is perhaps the key explanation for Abdullah's ability to step out of Malay society and look back at it to reflect upon its shortcomings and to recognise possibilities for its change from outside.

Technology and innovation

Linked with the idea of Western style education is the idea of science, technology and innovation generally. If the appearance of Europeans in the ports and cities of Southeast Asia was not seen as something immediately surprising for indigenous populations, well used to a whole variety of foreign traders, the same cannot be said of the new technology which the British brought with them. Initially the most obvious difference in technology would have been in the quality of and ability to manufacture firearms. However particularly by the nineteenth century the presence of other Western inventions was indicative of a growing technological gap between European and indigenous societies. This section will first discuss representation of technology in traditional Malay literature, and following on from this examine the literary representation of technology associated with the British.

Technology and innovation in traditional Malay literature

In order to consider the manner in which technology and innovation are portrayed in traditional Malay literature it is necessary first to define terms. Technology has been defined as 'the practice of any or all of the applied sciences that have practical value and or industrial use' (Chamber Dictionary, 1999: 1700). Certainly traditional Malay society made use of technology, as all human societies do. Literary examples of such technologies include the vast array of boats, weaponry, metalwork etc. which can be found in any number of traditional Malay texts. However, the idea that these things are innovative or new in some way is only rarely encountered in this literature. Rather they tend to be described in such a way as to

suggest that they have always existed. No doubt various kinds of boats, ships etc. will have developed and changed over time. However what matters for this study is whether and how these innovations were represented in Malay literature.

The idea of innovation, the discovery of new things, new ways of doing something, or new ways of understanding a particular phenomenon, is central to modern society. We might even argue that the demand to be original, rather than to simply copy and repeat the ideas and concepts of previous generations, is one of the fundamental characteristics of the modern. By way of contrast, the notion of continuity, the idea that all truths are already revealed, with a resultingly more introspective world-view, is one of the defining characteristics of the traditional. A traditional society can be understood as one which, rather than seeking to innovate, seeks to maintain and indeed define itself by existing communally-held beliefs. Again, to reiterate, it is well known that traditional societies do undergo fundamental changes, they do innovate, but the explanation for such change will come from a reinterpretation of existing knowledge, rather than by the realisation of novelty as such.

In discussing the literary representation of technology in traditional Malay literature, our main concern is with technology that is portrayed as being in some way remarkable. Additionally, attention will be given to abilities or powers that are somehow magical, again because these carry the suggestion of the new or the creation of something outside the existing capacity of a particular society. The examples used in the discussion below have been chosen for their parallels with technology described in connection with the British.

The Malay fantastic adventure story *Hikayat Indraputra* contains several sections which illustrate the types of technologies that drew the attention of traditional Malay authors. Alongside the flying jackets of *peri*, and a flying tray, there are also more sophisticated mechanical animals and monsters, the guardians of a princess's palace. Indraputra is confronted by seven such beasts in turn, and on each occasion he first thinks the beasts are living creatures, but then, on closer inspection, he realises that in fact they are human inventions, 'robots' of sort.

> **Maka dalam hati Indraputra, 'Gajah ini bukannya gajah sungguh, gajah ini hikmat juga rupanya maka demikian'.** (Mulyadi, 1983: 77)
>
> Then Indraputra said to himself, 'This is not a real elephant, rather it is an invention [lit. a magical creation]'.

Perhaps the most incredible feat of engineering to be found in *Hikayat Indraputra* is the magic boat which is made by the hero. Indraputra used magic to summon a team of *jinn* and *dewa,* who built the incredible vessel for him, which was indescribably beautiful, adorned with all manner of gems and precious stones, and even with an entire garden replete with peacocks on the deck. Besides its beauty, the boat was wondrous for the fact that as long as Indraputra was aboard, it could apparently move by itself. Some sort of mechanical device powered the boat, where wheels with chains connected to the oars removed the need for oarsmen:

> **Maka di haluan lancang itu dibubuhnya suatu jentera dan di buritan lancang itu diperbuatnya suatu jentera, talinya daripada rantai emas dan perak. Maka segala pegawai lancang itu diberinya berpesawat pada jentera itu. Apabila berkisar jentera itu, maka berkisarlah segala pegawai lancang itu sendirinya.** (Mulyadi, 1983: 177)
>
> At the bow of the boat was set in place a wheel, and at the stern a wheel was made, and the cord (connecting them) was of gold and silver chain. All the oars of the boat were made to work by those wheels. When the wheels turned, then all the oars of the boat moved by themselves.

It is important to note that this technological innovation was achieved through the use of magic. According to the text, such a marvellous invention, the like of which had never been seen before, could not possibly have been made by human hands.

In *Hikayat Isma Yatim*, there is a story of a most incredible and enchanting musical box (Roorda van Eysinga, 1821: 20-25). Isma Yatim presents an ivory chest before His Majesty. On seeing the box the king exclaimed that is was of such exquisite beauty that it could not possible be made by man (*candapeti itu bukan perbuatan manusia pada perasaanku).* The chest contained two sapphires. When the king placed one of the sapphires onto a golden tray, two beautiful peacocks appeared and when he put the other sapphire into a crystalline flask, it was transformed into a kind of miraculous musical box. The sapphire began to turn and resound and music of wondrous beauty poured forth. Later on when the king repeated the action, putting the sapphire into the flask, the sapphire whirled around, shone brightly and filled the

palace with its radiance. Such an astonishing sight was accompanied by the mesmerising beauty of the harmonious music, made up of one hundred and twelve modes (*setelah ligat pusingnya, maka keluarlah bunyinya yang seratus dua belas bagai ragam itu terlalu sekali merdu bunyinya*). The spectacle was so overwhelming that not only the king and his household were affected, but so too were the peacock and peahen, such that they danced on the golden tray and sang all manner of *pantun, seloka, bait* and *syair* (*Maka ia pun berbangkit isyki seraya keluar keduanya daripada permata itu, lalu mengigal di atas talam emas itu, terlalu indah-indah lakunya serta berpantun dan berseloka, syahdan ia berbait-bait dan bersyair...).* Thus this box of such beauty that it could not possibly be man-made, contained sapphires that when treated in the correct way, acted in combination, not only to produce lights and music, but also singing and dancing peacocks to accompany the show. This magical scene was not only a forerunner of mechanical musical boxes, but also one of the earliest sound and light extravaganzas to delight the hearts of the Malays!

While weapons and in particular of course the Malay *keris,* feature in many traditional Malay texts, the description of firearms and explosive materials is fairly infrequent in early traditional Malay texts[26]. For example there is no mention of the cannon (*meriam*) in *Hikayat Seri Rama* or *Hikayat Muhamad Hanaffiyah* for these texts are based on works which pre-date the arrival of firearms. That Malay authors soon responded to the changing realities of warfare is clear from the numerous mentions of firearms in later texts such as *Hikayat Hang Tuah* and *Hikayat Aceh.* However inclusion of such weaponry is portrayed not as something new or extraordinary, but rather as part of established know-how.

Portrayals of technology and innovation linked to the British

Abdullah was clearly influenced by the new technology and material goods brought to the Malay world by the British and other Europeans, in addition to the more abstract ideas that he gained from his reading and discussions with Europeans about scientific advances made in the West. While this fascination is articulated most

[26] Certainly the Malays were already in possession of firearms prior to the arrival of the Portuguese in Melaka in 1511, where they apparently captured more than three thousand pieces of artillery (Reid, 1999: 8).

clearly in Abdullah's works, the abilities of the British as a result of their advanced technology and the wider variety of extraordinary goods they brought to the Malay world is a subject of discussion in a number of Malay works. This commentary from Malay writers on innovation is particularly important for it is in these observations that the encounter not just with the West, but also with modernity is particularly apparent. An additional perspective on British science and learning is gained from a *hikayat* written in the 1870's, describing the Turko-Russian War.

Religion versus science

The *Hikayat peperangan al-Maulana sultan Istambul dengan raja Rusyin bernama Perins Alikjander,* while mostly concerned with the 1877-78 war between the Turkish and Russian armies, contains a particularly interesting section which relates the incredible power of two magic crystals, and the attempts by the British to both understand and to harness that power. In the *hikayat* the Sufi master Sheikh Sarsaban Zahid gives two magic crystals to his pupil, the leader of the Circassian army, Muhammad Shamwili. These green and red crystals had the power to absorb the light of the moon and sun respectively, and then to produce a flash which would blind the enemy. Later on in the story, the sultan of Istanbul is confronted by a group of artillerymen already blinded by the crystals. He orders a British and a French doctor to cure their blindness. Not only are the two doctors unable to find a cure, but also the British doctor, having been infected by the teardrop of one of the blind artillerymen, loses one of his own eyes. Thus he returns to London to report the events to his king, who never before having heard of such an amazing weapon in Europe, construes that magic must be involved. The king calls on four British medical experts to see whether a cure can be found. They decide that a journey to Istanbul is necessary to examine the cause of the mighty flash. Once in Istanbul, and having witnessed the flash for the first time, the doctors set to work to try to find a method of catching the powerful light. At the next demonstration Muhamad Shawili, finding the attitude of the British to be somewhat arrogant, aims the crystal at one of the doctors who is wearing green spectacles. He promptly falls down dead. The other three terrified doctors return to London to report to their king that the crystals are 'not of this world' and thus no method can be found to counteract or absorb its power.

This thoroughly entertaining and spectacular story also reveals a variety of attitudes towards religion, magic and science. The crystals are very closely linked in the *hikayat* with the power of Allah. They are presented by the Sufi master to Muhammad Shamwili along with a sword which has tremendous powers as long as its bearer knows the name of Allah, in order to fight the infidel Russians. The British response to the weapons is to try to find answers from experts and books, for the doctors try to find information about the powerful crystals in their *kitab tabib* (book of healing). Thus we can read this particular conflict not just as a battle between believer and *kafir*, but also as a battle between religion and science. Not just is the amazing weapon explained with a magical and religious rationale, but indeed the crystals soundly defeat the scientific rationality of the British to the extent that they too have to recognise that such a powerful weapon must be from another world.

The story of the British doctors and their attempt to understand how to withstand the magic crystals, while coming from a text written in the 1870's, is a useful link from those much earlier texts to those texts that mention the British. For in this encounter, magic and religion win out over science and rationalism. As such, this episode, which comes from a text representing the resistance of the Muslim Ottomans to the non-Muslim Russians, can also be understood as part of a case for the rejection of Western claims to superiority, and the championing of the belief in Islam as the route for resistance to non-Muslim domination. There is also the ominous warning contained in the text, that if the British had control of such a weapon as the crystals, they would undoubtedly have conquered all the countries of the world. The meaning of the author in writing this is not immediately apparent. However it might be taken to suggest that if the British, with their scientific knowledge, also had the blessing of Allah (for it was surely only those that knew Allah who could use the crystals to their advantage), then they would truly be an unstoppable force.

Abdullah on new technologies

On various occasions in *Hikayat Abdullah*, the author portrays the might of the British by recounting events linked closely with technological innovations. One of the most striking of such stories is the description of the destruction of the old Portuguese fort at Melaka.

> **Maka adalah kira2 sepuluh menit lamanya maka meletuplah obat bedil itu seperti bunyi petir. Maka terbongkarlah batu kota itu sebesar2 rumah dan yang ada sebesar gajah berterbangan ke dalam laut.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 54)
>
> Then after about ten minutes the gunpowder exploded, sounding like a clap of thunder. Stones as big as houses were blown from the fort into the sky, and stones as big as elephants flew into the sea.

Certainly the description seems to lend itself to traditional Malay formulae in the seemingly exaggerated size of the stones flying forth from the site of the fort. However the reaction of the people to the spectacle created by the British is revealing and tells us something about how this display of force also evoked the understanding of a new reality:

> **Maka terkejutlah orang semuanya, sebab menengar bunyinya itu serta dengan sebesar2 heran, sebab seumur hidup mereka itu belum pernah menengar bunyi yang demikian. Dan sebab melihatkan bagaimana besar kuasa obat bedil itu sampai boleh ia mengangkatkan batu sebesar2 seperti rumah, maka baharulah masing2 percaya yang boleh dipecahkan oleh Inggeris kota itu. Maka masing2 menggeleng kepala, katanya: 'Banyak sungguh kepandaian dan hikmat orang putih ini, akan tetapi terlalulah sayanglah kota sebagus ini dibinasakan dengan sebentar juga. Maka jikalau hendak dibaiki entah beberapa tahun belum lagi boleh jadi demikian?'** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 55)
>
> Everyone was startled, hearing such a great noise was astonishing, because in all their lives they had never heard a noise like this. Because they saw that the gunpowder was powerful enough to lift up stones as big as houses, only then did they believe that the fort could be destroyed by the British. Several of them shook their heads, saying: 'Truly great is the skill and invention of these white men, but it is so sad that a fort as beautiful as that can be destroyed in just a moment. If it were to be repaired how many more years would be needed to do that?' (cf. Hill, 1970: 63)

In addition to the overwhelming sensation induced by the British display of power, resulting from gunpowder, the strength of which had apparently never been witnessed before, there is clearly the feeling that something much greater than just a fort has been destroyed. This symbol of Portuguese might, which had survived throughout the Dutch period, was destroyed easily and immediately.

Abdullah sees the destruction as symbolising the end of the glory of Melaka and very much the beginning of a new world order, *yang ada tiadakan dan yang tidak diadakan berubah2 adanya*. The local population had doubted the ability of the British to destroy the fort on two counts: firstly, because of the sheer strength of the building, but secondly, Abdullah argues, because of the number of ghosts that

inhabited it (*pada sangka dan percaya mereka itu, banyak hantu syaitan di kota itu*). The destruction of the fort represented the presence of a new physical force never before witnessed in Melaka. But by destroying the fort, and thereby the ghosts that had caused so much fear for the local population, Abdullah's account of this event also bears witness to another change brought about by the British presence: the victory of gunpowder over ghosts, or of science over folk-belief. This is a theme Abdullah often returns to. We already know that the information Abdullah gained from books encouraged him to reject what he saw as superstition and old wives' tales. In the account of the destruction of the fort, Abdullah presents a concrete example of technology confounding locally held superstitions.

It should be noted that Abdullah was not only interested in innovations and new technologies from Britain. Certainly, living in colonial Singapore, his primary exposure to the 'other' was via the British, but he also noted his encounter with new ideas from other quarters. A good example of this is his lengthy description of the elephant trap made by the *pawang gajah*[27]. Certainly the construction of the enclosure to catch elephants in the jungle near Melaka is described by Abdullah as creating a great local attraction.

> **Maka hati masing2pun menggeleteklah hendak pergi melihat bagaimanakah perbuatannya itu, karena seumur hidup orang Melaka pun belum pernah melihat pekerjaan itu. Maka hatiku pun pada ketika itu jangan dikata lagi; kalau kiranya aku seperti burung yang lengkap dengan dua sayap, maka dengan seketika itu juga rasanya hendak terbang pergi melihat itu.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 61)
>
> People's hearts leapt at the thoughts of seeing how an elephant trap was made, for never in their lives had those in Melaka seen such a contrivance. I was excited beyond words, so much so that, had I wings like a bird, I would have immediately flown there to see it.

In this incident it is clear that the trapping of the elephants, new to the inhabitants of Melaka, though by all accounts an established feature of Malay culture, was hugely popular. Indeed this traditional spectacle seems to have had a greater appeal to the local population than did the spectacle of displays of 'foreign' technology. Abdullah too was greatly intrigued by the event demonstrating his interest in all aspects of culture, both traditional and modern. Of course Abdullah rejected the views of the

[27] The name implies an expert in the catching of elephants.

many people who claimed that the *pawang* was versed in sorcery and magic, and was able to control *jinn*, instead championing the strength of human intelligence rather than charms or incantations (*sekalian perkara itu dengan akal saja, bukannya dengan obat atau hikmat atau doa adanya*). The mixture of traditional activity with more modern rationalisation, is also clear in the initial motivation for the entrapping of the elephants, for it was on the offer of payment by Farquhar that the *pawang* set to work. Also following the death of the elephants, the bones were reportedly sent to Britain, though for what reason Abdullah either did not know or does not reveal[28].

One example from *Hikayat Abdullah* of new skills and abilities brought to Melaka by the British also has an interesting parallel *in Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala*. Abdullah relates the coming of a cavalry regiment from India, with three British officers (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 91-93). The local population is much impressed by the displays of horsemanship, and in particular the spectacle of the British officer jumping his horse over a fence of about ten feet (*tujuh hasta*). Abdullah records the somewhat naive responses of local onlookers to this feat with remarks that either the British officer 'was not human' (*ini bukannya manusia*), or that the officer must certainly be a *jinn* (*Inggeris ini betul jin*). A comparison with the reaction of Ahmad Rijaluddin, when he was confronted by a similar show of horsemanship in Bengal, reveals an important difference in the approach of the two men. Ahmad claimed that Europeans themselves explained the abilities of Pathan horsemen as being attributable to their being of a race other than human:

> **Maka heran dan dahsyat sekalian mereka yang ada melihat dan sekalian Inglan Pertugal Belanda Armani berkata: 'Bukannya manusia yang naik kuda itu, adalah ia itu jin atau peri maka demikian lakunya terlalu pantas seperti akan terbang lakunya'.** (Skinner, 1982: 140)
>
> Those looking on – British, Portuguese, Dutch and Armenians – were amazed and astounded and said, 'These riders are not human, they must be *jinn* or supernatural beings to go so fast as if they might flying!'

While Abdullah is careful to distance himself from his fellow countrymen's likening of British men to supernatural beings, Ahmad presents the Europeans themselves as

[28] Another example of this referring back to Britain as perhaps a means of increasing the perceived importance, status and worth of the activity can be seen in Muhammed Salleh bin Perang's note that on completion of the mapping of Johor, the document was pronounced correct by the head surveyors in London (Sweeney, 1980b: 54).

likening the Pathan horsemen to *jinn*. While it may be the case that these were the exclamations heard by Ahmad, it is most unlikely. Having already described the horses as taller than elephants, the passage is clearly far from the more realistic descriptions to be found in Abdullah's writing. While Abdullah sees himself as mediating between the ideas of the Europeans and the local population, entering into a dialogue with the new realities brought forth by the British, Ahmad is only able to portray the Europeans as responding in the same way as he himself would, in accordance with his own tradition. He can only impose the norms and formulae of traditional Malay literature when depicting the reactions of the Europeans.

The technology that had the most obvious impact on the production of literature was the printing press. Abdullah himself was very much involved in the use of the first printing press in the Straits Settlements, and his amazed reaction towards the new technology is particularly worthy of mention. Abdullah realised the tremendous potential that such technology offered, particularly relating to the realm of education. This is not a topic that was mentioned by other Malay writers directly, though the evidence of the rise of printing in the nineteenth century in the Malay world certainly demonstrates that it was embraced by various Malay writers.

Abdullah's introduction to his edition of *Sejarah Melayu* does much to enhance our understanding of the benefits he perceived to be gained from printing. Compared with the manuscript tradition, he saw four main advantages; the accuracy of the text, the speed of preparation, the clarity of the printed word, and the low cost of production (Abdullah's introduction in Situmorang and Teeuw, 1952: xxii). He argues that in Malay states, due to the laborious process of copying manuscripts, there is both a dearth of books and also a dearth of knowledge (*di mana ada sedikit kitab, di sana adalah sedikit ilmu adanya*). Regarding the lower cost of the printed book, Abdullah argued that as a result of cheaper production costs, books could become the possessions of rich and poor alike. In particular he saw this as a way of increasing the study of the Malay language. He links knowledge of print technology to the greatness of imperial powers, linking educated populations with the ability to subjugate other peoples. Abdullah makes an important link between ignorance and disempowerment:

> **Maka jikalau mereka itu sekalian menolakkan faedah besar itu serta berkata: 'Apakah gunanya ilmu cap itu dan terlebih baik kitab2 itu mahal harganya boleh disembunyikan orang akan dia', nescaya tinggal mereka itu sekalian dalam bodohnya seperti dahulukala juga adanya.** (Abdullah in Situmorang and Teeuw, 1952: xxvii)
>
> If they all oppose the benefits [of cheap books] and say: 'What is the use of printing know-how, and that it is better that those expensive books are hidden away from the people', certainly they will all remain in ignorance as they have always been.

In the same section of this text, Abdullah writes that Europeans too had previously lived in ignorance (*kebodohan*), prior to the development of printing technology. Thus we can see that Abdullah's argument seems to suggest that opposing printing and the knowledge that books can carry, is to argue for a situation that would allow the Malays to continue to live not just in ignorance, but also in colonial shackles, subjugated by peoples that embrace printing and new knowledge. Yet again we see arguments that support the idea that Abdullah, rather than simply mimicking the British, was actually trying to establish the reason for their superiority and to argue for a future that would see the Malays on an equal footing.

Abdullah's first encounter with a printed book was when shown a Malay translation of the Bible prepared in Holland. Abdullah, while very much disappointed by the Malay idiom used in the translation, was very much attracted to the printing itself. He did note that to print such a bad translation was a waste of time. The reaction of Abdullah's friends and neighbours was typical, warning that it was produced by white men and therefore a threat to their faith. Thus, when seeking to comprehend the suspicion and ambivalence towards the technologies introduced by the British, it is important to understand the various layers of explanations for the reaction. In this case, it was not the simple introduction of a printed book that was a cause for concern, but rather a printed Bible in Malay translation. Indeed the first printing press that Abdullah saw was used by Mr Milne to print the Ten Commandments in Malay. Thus, in the same way that new educational opportunities offered under the British were very much linked with the Christian missions, so too printing technology also had a clear Christian link.

One final incident from *Hikayat Abdullah* demonstrates not just the perceived benefits of Western knowledge and innovation, in this case Western medicine, but

also we see the various ethnic groups having different attitudes towards such new practices. Abdullah reports that he had been suffering as a result of a hydrocele when, by chance, an eminent British doctor visiting from India, offered to cure Abdullah, by very minor surgery. Abdullah records that he had tried various medicines to no avail and he writes at some length as to how he overcame his reservations, finally putting his faith in Western medicine. The surgery was successful and Abdullah was cured.

As we have come to expect from Abdullah's writing, he notes that many of his friends advised against the operation, fearing that the science and knowledge of Europeans might not work:

> **'Janganlah dibuat itu kerja, karena adat orang putih itu, dalam dua salah satu, matipun matilah, hiduppun hiduplah', dan lagi katanya: 'kalau terdengar khabar ini ke Melaka kepada ibu bapamu dan isterimu, niscaya menjadikan duka-cita yang amat besar'.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 263)
>
> 'Don't have it done. With these white men it is only a one in two chance: if you die you die and if you live you live', and they went on, 'If this story were to reach your parents and your wife in Melaka, certainly it would cause them a great deal of grief.

The reported advice of his friends may be seen as representative of the common opinion in Singapore. Not just is there fear of the medicine, but there is also the suggestion that to enter into the hands of the white men would cause distress to Abdullah's family. Treatment by a Western doctor would represent a departure from, perhaps even a betrayal of, the traditional ideas and beliefs enshrined in him by his family. Even when visitors to Abdullah's house in Melaka saw the results of the operation, he reports that there was a deep reluctance to embrace the ways of the British, despite their obvious benefits. The visitors declared:

> **'Hatinya menurut akal orang putih, maka kalau aku sekalian biarlah mati dengan penyakit itu, tiadalah berani berbuat demikian itu.'** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 265)
>
> 'His mind accepts the ways of the white man. If it had been any of us we would rather have died of the disease than summon up the courage to do what he did.'

Suggestive of differing ethnic attitudes towards the ideas brought by the British, Abdullah notes that on hearing of the success of the operation, some men from Melaka, of both Indian and Chinese descent, came to Singapore, trying to have the same operation. Notably no Malays came to seek treatment from the eminent doctor,

though we are informed that it is an affliction suffered by Malays, Chinese and Indians. Abdullah's consideration of the British doctor and Western medicine generally was further enhanced by his realisation that his doctor sported a wooden leg. He was apparently so impressed by the spectacle that he wrote:

> **Maka heran besarlah dalam hatiku sebab melihat hikmat orang putih ini, nyawa sahaja tiada boleh diadakannya, maka lain dari pada itu semuanya boleh diperbuatnya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 262)
>
> I was really quite astonished on seeing the white man's power [to make the wooden leg]. The soul alone he cannot create, but everything else he can do.

Military technology and steamships

Reid (1999: 8) argues, 'advances in technology are most quickly borrowed in the military sphere. It is a question of survival. Firearms are a case in point'. Be that as it may, when the Portuguese first arrived in the region their military technology was far superior to the firearms possessed by indigenous powers. Thus states in the region quickly tried to acquire European style weaponry and also the know-how to produce such weaponry locally, with large cannons apparently a particular object of desire in the Archipelago (Reid, 1999: 9). Perhaps unsurprisingly the earliest Malay literary references to British technologies are those describing firearms. One of the earliest texts to depict the British in connection with firearms is *Misa Melayu*. The only significant mention of the British in that text, dating from the later eighteenth century, concerns the trade of two cannons for some tin. As the Dutch who feature more strongly in *Misa Melayu*, maintained a policy of not selling arms to the local population, the British, still at this time more interested in trade than driven by any colonial ambition, were seemingly noticed by the Malays of Perak for their willingness to trade in arms. Similarly in *Tuhfat al-nafis,* many of the accounts of the British are in connection with the supply of arms. In the period prior to the establishment of British settlements on the Malay Peninsula, the EIC is generally described engaging in trade of weapons for local produce, particularly tin. For example:

> **Syahadan adapun kompeni Inggeris selalulah juga membawakan ubat bedil dan meriam dan senapang berjual beli di dalam negeri Melayu berpalu dengan dagangan negeri-negeri Melayu, demikianlah halnya sehari-hari adanya.** (Matheson Hooker, 1998: 276)

> The British Company always brought ammunition, cannon and rifles to trade in the Malay lands with local traders, that is how it was as the days passed by.

In Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi, there is quite a detailed description of a battle between the British and French/Dutch, which includes naming the various types of weaponry. From the British side, weapons such as *bom* (bomb) and *peluru geranat* (grenade)[29] were used in response to *peluru buah anggur* (grape shot)[30], *peluru bulang-baling* (spinning bullets) and *peluru duit batu* (stone bullets). This detailing of types of weaponry is unusual in traditional Malay literature. We can perhaps see this description of the various arms being used as a demonstration of the ferocity and all encompassing nature of the battle. However the knowledge of the names for the various implements of warfare also suggests something of a fascination with these new varieties of weapon. The author's description of the battle in *Syair Mukomuko* shows the differences in fighting equipment available to local Malay rulers and the British. Before the British arrived to support the sultan, fighting between the two local factions had been conducted with lance, spear and sword (*tombak, lembing dan padang*). The arrival of the Company's sepoys, however also hailed the arrival of cannon (*meriam*[31]). In the twentieth century text *Hikayat Pahang* (Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 129), the military skill and capabilities of the British are described as incomparably better than all others (*tiadalah bandingnya alatan dan kepandaian orang Inggeris*). Innovations in British firepower are also referred to by Abdullah, for example in his *Cerita kapal asap*. In his account of his tour of the steamship *Sesostris*, Abdullah not only notes the size and strength of the cannons, but also the gunpowder, which 'wasn't like the gunpowder used by most cannons'. Rather he noted it was already solidified into small pellets, and covered in wax, giving the advantage that rain or damp were no problem to its usage.

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[29] While bombs and grenades had declined in usage by the nineteenth century, they were used during the Napoleonic Wars. Grenades tended to be small handheld hollowed iron balls filled with incendiary material, and lit with a fuse. Bombs used at this time were giant grenades, around 10-13 inches in diameter, which would be fired from cannons (private correspondence with Keith Miller, National Army Museum, London).

[30] The description of the use of grape shot corresponds with Thorn's memoir (1815: 58). The description of the shot spraying from the mouths of cannons is in accordance with regular usage of such weaponry (private correspondence with Keith Miller, National Army Museum, London).

[31] Kathirithamby-Wells and Muhammad Yusoff Hashim (1985: 52) transcribe the line as follows: *meriam (?) palpis serta pula*. The meaning of palpis (f-l-f-y-s) is unclear, however there seems little doubt that it refers to some sort of cannon.

Mohamed Salleh bin Perang's observations on the difference between Malay and European battle techniques, written in the latter part of the nineteenth century, show that Western military capacity was seen as being more precise and violent:

> **Tetapi namanya sahaja perang bukannya seperti perang bangsa orang putih dengan mendada mengadap musuh itu di antara satu dengan lainnya adapun perang Melayu ini perang penakut dengan menghendap dan berselidung ... meskipun senapang itu gugup seperti bertih digoreng ... hanyalah menghabiskan obat peluru dengan sia2 sahaja seperti menembak angin tinggal jika ada peluru yang sesat dan siapa yang berajal kenalah dia hanyalah untungnya sahaja perang yang demikian ini tiada banyak mencacatkan jiwa hamba Allah Ta'ala...**
>
> (Sweeney, 1980c: 47)
>
> However it is war in name only, not like the wars fought by white men, who engage in hand-to-hand fighting with the enemy. The war of the Malays is the war of cowards, lying in wait and well hidden... Even though the rifles pop away like rice being fried in the husk ... all it does is to waste ammunition, like shooting in the wind, unless, of course, there are some stray bullets, then any soul whose appointed time has come will be hit. The only advantage of such war is that not many souls of God's servants are lost.

When Abdullah (1841) described the coming of the first steamship to Singapore, his interest was not only attracted by the weaponry on board. He was fascinated by every detail, from the size of the engine to the behaviour of the crew. This interest in the coming of the steamship, to the extent that Abdullah devoted a whole text to the event, is not surprising. As Reid (1999: 260) describes, states across Southeast Asia gained possession of steamships in the first half of the nineteenth century, including Vietnam in the 1830s and Siam and Burma in the 1850s. The archipelago states of Aceh and Lombok also tried to purchase steamships to the annoyance of the Dutch. While there are no other texts specifically devoted to steamships, ships do crop up in a wide variety of texts. It is noticeable that the ships are not just mentioned, but often the particular name of the ship and even the company operating it (invariably P and O) will be recorded. Examples include *Mercury,* which the Prince of Wales travelled on in *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Johor,* and *Telegraph*, in *Kisah pelayaran Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi*[32]. This particular interest in ships should be understood in the context of traditional Malay literature generally, where even if boats were not specifically named, details of

[32] The presence of this ship is directly linked with development and urbanisation of the town of Klang (See Sweeney and Phillips, 1975: 62).

the various types of boats, particularly those which formed part of royal fleets, is a very common feature.

Material and decorative goods

In Malay works from around the mid-nineteenth century onwards, an increased attention to new material and decorative goods is noticeable. While many of those manufactured goods came from Britain and elsewhere in Europe they were also described as coming from various Asian states. Abdullah's description of Raffles' possessions is quite typical.

> **Maka adalah dibawanya beberapa perkara barang2 yang indah2 dari pada perbuatan Eropah, yaitu seperti beberapa macam ber-peti2, dan pestol dan kain atlas yang mahal2 harganya dan kain khas bunga emas dan lagi beberapa jenis perkakasan yang belum pernah dilihat orang.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 73)
>
> He [Raffles] brought with him many beautiful objects of European workmanship, such as items displayed in cabinets, pistols, expensive satin fabrics and gold-embroidered cloth, and a great many other things that had never been seen before.

As has been noted in Chapter Three, it was quite common to record goods as coming from Europe, rather than to specifically name Britain or another European country. Na Tian Piet makes many references to the goods from overseas that adorn the residence of the Johor sultan in his poem *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar*. For example plentiful unnamed goods of various colours are described as coming from Europe, Japan and China (*Banjak pekakas nja didalam astana / barang periasan bermatjam warna / datang dari Europa, Japan dan Tjina*). Thus, while Na Tian Piet is certainly placing value on the ownership of imported goods, there is no indication that European goods are seen as superior to the goods coming from China and Japan[33]. On other occasions, goods in the palace are described as coming from Europe, Istanbul and Egypt:

[33] As discussed in Chapter Three, whereas China had long been known in the Malay world, knowledge of Japan was far more limited. The mention of Japanese goods in this late nineteenth century poem is evidence of growing awareness of that country in the Malay world, In this regard, Mohamed Salleh bin Perang's account of his travels to Japan should also be remembered.

Begimana tiada banjak harta	How could he not have acquired many possessions
Ampat kali blaijar sultan bertakta	Four times the sultan has travelled while on the throne
Ka Europa Metsir dan Stamboel kota.	To Europe, Egypt and the City of Istanbul.

(Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 350)

The purpose of such detail is to stress the wealth of the Johor sultan, but also to stress the international experiences of the ruler. He is a man who travelled extensively, buying goods and adopting ideas from the places he visited. In this light we are told that the clothing favoured by the sultan resembled Turkish fashions.

A slightly more dismissive view of the value of European goods can be found in Mohamed Ibrahim's account of his voyages around the Malay Peninsula. Certainly, Ibrahim was impressed by the gas lighting and telegraph wires in Singapore[34] and the system of water pipes in Penang (Sweeney, 1980c: 102) However he also suggests a wisdom in his writing that stems from his experiences in different states, and working with both Malays and British. Travelling as an interpreter to the British official Irving, he recorded the gift of a musical box from Irving to the son of the yamtuan of Selangor, Abdul Samad:

> **Aku tolonglah bunyikan biar anak raja itu dengar aku pun bunyikan peti itu terlalu suka anak raja dengan herannya mendengar lagu dan bunyi peti itu. Bukanlah anak raja sahaja yang heran hingga yamtuan dan lain2 orang yang ada hadir di penghadapan itu pun tercengang belaka padahal tiada berapa indah tinggi bangsa peti itu sekadar iaitu suatu peti orgin kecewa pada anggaranku harganya dalam dua puluh ringgit sahaja.** (Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi, 1956: 50)
>
> I started playing it [the musical box] so that the prince might hear it and he was delighted and filled with astonishment on hearing the songs and tunes coming from the musical box. He was not the only one to be amazed; even the yamtuan and the other people attending the audience all gaped in wonder. Actually there was nothing special about it, the musical box was rather low quality in my opinion, its value only being twenty ringgit.

Mohamed Ibrahim, writing in the 1870's, was already well enough accustomed with European imports to be discriminating with regards to quality. He realises the effect that these rather cheap Western goods could have on those Malay communities that had less contact and therefore less familiarity with the technologies introduced by the

[34] Na Tian Piet was also impressed by the electric lighting in the sultan's palace in Singapore, which was maintained by Britons (Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 350).

British. Also, as an employee of the Johor sultan, Abu Bakar, Mohamed was of course working for a Malay sultan who, while he enjoyed many aspects of British culture, also maintained the political independence of the sultanate. It seems that in this incident Mohamed is also regretting how easily the yamtuan and his court fell into the thrall of Irving, the Straits auditor-general. In his dismissive attitude, we perhaps also see something of a resistance to, or resentment at, the increasingly powerful British presence. As Sweeney and Phillips observe (1975: xxvii), Mohamed Ibrahim does not doubt the material superiority of the British settlements as he witnessed in Singapore, Melaka and Penang. He is certainly not enamoured by the lack of interest in learning of the up-country Malays that he meets on various occasions. He is aware of the superior position of Johor in comparison with other Malay states, and while he is certainly, like his father, an advocate for change and development, in this scene with the musical box, we also see something of a disappointment in the attitude and vulnerability of his fellow Malays.

Conclusion

It is quite apparent that there is no strict sense of chronological development concerning interest in British technology and innovation to be found in these texts. We cannot detect evidence of ever deepening dialogue with the British regarding these subjects. Rather we see a sporadic interest in them by particular authors, greater in some works and lesser in the others. Nonetheless the general theme of this section has been the displacement of beliefs in magic and superstition by a confidence in Western technologies and science, though we can still see a continuation of these traditional beliefs, even if they are somewhat weakened and transformed. In the account of the Russo-Turkish war this continuity is most evident. Magical ideas, backed up by religious authority, win out over science. However in this text there is the idea not simply of the continuation of old beliefs, but rather of their revitalisation. The author is aware of the science- and technology-centred concepts of the West, but he rejects them with a call to strengthen the Islamic doctrine

From Abdullah there is an appreciation of traditional technologies in his description of the work of the elephant trapper. However while the results are commended, the thinking behind the trapper's work is challenged. Abdullah provides

alternatives to the superstitious and magical explanations of the *pawang gajah* and the local people, seeking more rational and scientific justifications for the success of this traditional method of catching elephants. Abdullah is mainly interested in new technologies. He is excited by the potential of the printing press, and astounded by the steamship. A British doctor cures him of a malady. The knowledge and capabilities of the British are not presented as just one more addition from one more foreign people in Melaka, but rather the British are portrayed as a people who brought change to the region as had never been experienced before. Abdullah embraced the new knowledge that the encounter with the West made available, whether through direct contact with Westerners or through books. The authority lent by these sources, gave Abdullah the confidence to reject superstition and folk-beliefs, and to embrace the knowledge and technologies that stemmed from scientific advances and discoveries.

Other writers also saw these new innovations as evidence of development, as in the case of the presence of the steamship at Klang, or the gas lighting in Singapore. So too imported goods were used as an indication of experience of the wider world, good taste and wealth in a variety of texts. However, in the work of Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi, a more critical view arises. He was scathing of the gift of the cheap musical box, and the astonishment and delight such a low quality product engendered. Such an understanding of British actions does not simply demonstrate a suspicion of British motives and intent, but it suggests a far more discerning attitude to Western innovations than is recorded by other authors.

CHAPTER SIX

PORTRAYALS OF BRITISH INDIVIDUALS

Chapters Three, Four and Five of this thesis have sought to understand and explain how Malay writers portrayed and located Britain as a nation, together with certain key British institutions and cultural ideas, in their literature. In this final chapter, the focus will be more particular, aimed not at the state but rather at the individual. Looking for individual characterisations in a traditional literature, which by its very nature is a literature inclined to the representation of communal beliefs and values, is not necessarily the easiest task. As has been discussed by various scholars, traditional Malay literature tends to be populated by stock types, with generalised and often clichéd characteristics. These traits serve to identify characters as members of a particular group rather than marking them out for their difference or uniqueness, or in other words, for their individuality. Braginsky (2005: 192) has noted in reference to *Sejarah Melayu* 'the more a sultan corresponds to the ideal of state ethics, the less we know about him as a human being', and the same can probably be said for most character types in traditional Malay literature. It is only when the character deviates from ideal norms that specific features of his transgressive behaviour may become an object of description, and the 'traits of an individualised human being' are revealed.

In examining the portrayal of individual Britons, this chapter will consider to what extent there is evidence of focus on unique individualised traits, or whether, following traditional Malay conventions, the portraits are of a more stock and formulaic nature. Following the pattern of previous chapters, the first task is to discuss the portraiture of individuals in traditional Malay literature generally. Obviously this is a potentially broad topic and for the purposes of this discussion, only those aspects directly relevant as a basis for comparison with the portraiture of British individuals will be discussed. In the second part of this chapter we shall first pay attention to some general categories and traits of British individuals as they are portrayed in Malay literature, so that afterwards we can take a closer look at the portraits of four particular personages, who occur in a number of texts.

The portrayal of individuals in traditional Malay literature

While the rich variety of character types that made up traditional Malay society is certainly to be found in the written literature that emanated from the Malay courts, the court-centrism of this literature invariably means that members of the court, in particular the ruler and ruler's household, are especially well represented in it. The ruler is central to any Malay genealogical work or court chronicle, though often his officials, and in particular the *bendahara,* also play an important role in such texts. Rulers and princes also take centre stage in fantastic adventure *hikayat.* While it is often women who represent the focus of attention in many of the romantic *syair*, these are generally court women, the wives and relatives of the ruler.

Merchants are to be found in a number of traditional texts, for example in *Syair Bidasari* in which a merchant gives a well-known Islamic diatribe. Several merchants feature in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman,* and they are also to be found in a number of *syair*, such as *Syair Sinyor Kosta*, *Syair Saudagar Bodoh* and *Syair Saudagar Budiman.* While peoples of other estates and professions are also encountered in works of court writers, they are generally portrayed in passing, and, with the exception of merchants, they are rarely foregrounded. Thus people of the bazaar are given a voice in *Hikayat raja Pasai.* Teachers are to be found in a number of texts, but particularly in *Hikayat Isma Yatim,* where we also come across a scribe. Craftsmen are mentioned in the treatises of Hamzah Fansuri and there is the future *laksamana* in *Sejarah Melayu* who produces lamps. Ship's captains take more of a role in *Hikayat Bayan Budiman* and *Hikayat Si Miskin*, while some attention is devoted to artists in *Hikayat Indraputra* and to saints and clerics in *Hikayat Ibrahim ibn Adham.* Pirates feature in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, and there is even a shepherd in *Hikayat Indraputra.*

The ideal ruler in traditional court literature

While the ruler obviously occupies a particular position at the apex of society, with certain unique duties and functions, he is also generally seen as the embodiment of many of the values and ethical norms that should be aspired to by all members of society. The description of the ideal ruler is certainly the best developed of all categories

of characters in traditional Malay literature. Thus, an examination of the ideal ruler's behaviour and conduct will augment our understanding of ideal Malay behaviour[1].

The Malay ruler had to be seen by his subjects as possessing *daulat* (God given supernatural power). The term itself derives from Arabic, but Gullick argues that the idea of the ruler's supernatural power derives from a synthesis of Indonesian, Muslim Indian and Hindu beliefs (Gullick, 1988: 45). Primarily it is this concept of *daulat* that separates the ruler from his subjects. Also it is *daulat* which will protect the ruler from anyone who is going to insult or injure its possessor. Wilkinson notes that *daulat* is used only of Islamic rulers, and that non-Muslim rulers and non-royal Malay chiefs have only *andeka* (sancrosanctity) (Wilkinson, 1932: vol. 2, 261).

Perhaps the most important quality of a Malay ruler is that he must be just (*adil*). The just ruler will always make a thorough investigation (*memeriksa*) before passing a sentence on his subjects. Often this quality will be linked with another key virtue, the ruler's generosity (*murah*). The ruler is generally depicted as loving his people (*pengasih*). In *Hikayat Aceh* for example, that love is directed by the ruler towards his subjects and also the merchants who come to Aceh (*amat pengasih akan segala yang disisinya dan akan segala dagang-dagang*; Iskandar, 1958: 184). In *Bustanus salatin,* Sultan Ali Riayat Syah is described as being very loving towards his subjects and also compassionate (*syafakat*) towards the mendicant dervishes and the poor (*pengasih akan segala rakyatnya dan akan segala ulama, syafakat akan segala fakir dan miskin*; Siti Hawa Haji Salleh 1992:13-24).

Great importance is placed in traditional Malay texts, on having high or even perfect intellect (*akal yang sempurna*). One can find numerous references to the high intellect of rulers and officials. There are also many examples of the danger of losing one's head (*akalnya hilang*) or of not having high intellect (*kurang akal, tiada akal*). The Malay ruler should also be skilful in practical matters (*bijaksana*)[2]. He will often be described as skilful, witty, intelligent and accomplished (*bijak bestari*). Another essential attribute ascribed to the sultan is that he is of good character (*baik budi*). Finally an important aspect of the relationship between the ruler and his people is that the people must be fearful (*takut dan ngeri*) of their ruler and at the same time love him (*kasih*).

[1] In previous chapters looking at justice and education, some of these ideal characteristics have already been considered, but it is useful at this point to summarise all attributes of the ideal ruler.
[2] *Bijaksana* is sometimes shortened to *bijak* or lengthened to *bijak-laksana* (Wilkinson, 1932 Part 1: 138).

The result of all, or at least a combination, of these qualities is that the ruler's name is extremely famous (*masyhur*)[3].

Portrayals of emotions in traditional Malay literature are fairly limited and extremely formulaic. Malay rulers are described as reacting to all manner of situations with a smile (*tersenyum*). For rulers to become angry (*marah* or *murka*) or to be surprised (*terkejut*) are stock reactions to be found on numerous occasions in almost any text. Expressions of astonishment (*heran / kagum*) are also common. Distress will often be demonstrated by the formulaic tearing of clothes.

Physical appearance

Detailed physical descriptions of individuals in traditional Malay literature are scarce, though portraits of women are more common than those of men. Often it will simply be stated that a ruler is handsome or beautiful (*baik parasnya*) [4]. One of the few non-royal portraits to be found is the self-portrait of Ence' Amin in *Syair perang Mengkasar* (Skinner, 1963: 90), which in addition to such features as grace and elegance of movements (*lemah lembut badannya ayu*), mention that he is of medium build and height (*tubuhnya sedang sederhana pandak*). By way of contrast, Ence' Amin's twelve stanza description of his ruler and patron contains only one very general reference to his appearance, noting that he is handsome (*Bagindalah raja yang amat elok*; Skinner, 1963: 74). Highly detailed descriptions of invariably beautiful females can be found in texts such as *Hikayat Andaken Penurat* (Robson, 1969: 34-5) and *Syair Bidasari* (Jamilah Hj. Ahmad, 1989: 42-45). The formulae used for describing physical beauty are quite particular. Various parts of the body are named and likened to a part of a flower, or a fruit or even an animal. For example teeth are generally likened to pomegranate seeds (*delima merekah*), thighs to those of a grasshopper (*paha belalang*) and calves to swollen rice grains (*bunting padi*). Waists are generally slender (*pinggang ramping*) and chests broad (*dada bidang*). Certainly the idea of the combination of this variety of images might appear quite disturbing to the modern audience. However these literary portrayals of beauty were certainly not aiming at anything that might be understood as realistic. Rather it was the comprehensive totality of ideals that was deemed important as a means of reflecting physical beauty.

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[3] Thus in *Misa Melayu*, we are told of the great fame of Sultan Alauddin Mansur Syah as a result of his wisdom and the just and generous nature of his rule (*Kerana masyhur pada negeri yang lain-lain akan baik budi baginda itu dengan adilnya dan murahnya*; Raja Chulan, 1962: 193).

[4] For example in *Sejarah Melayu*, in telling us about the new born prince, the narrative relates that *Baginda beristerikan saudara Sultan Mahmud, beranak seorang lelaki bernama Raja Mansur, terlalu baik parasnya* (A. Samad Ahmad, 1979: 207).

Titles and hierarchy

At the head of the political hierarchy was the ruler. Gullick (1988: 44) states that the Malay ruler bore various titles: *yang di pertuan* (he who is made lord), 'raja', a title deriving from the Hindu tradition, and 'sultan' deriving from Arabic. The difference between 'sultan' and 'raja' is exemplified in the passage from one of the oldest Malay texts, *Hikayat raja Pasai*, when Merah Silau embraces Islam. He is told by the prophet Muhammad in a dream that having uttered the Islamic profession of faith he has become a Muslim and that he is now called Malikul Saleh, with the Islamic title 'sultan' (Jones, 1999, 14). In addition to being a title for monarchs, 'raja' also tends to be used more as a generic word for ruler, even when the title accorded to the ruler is 'sultan'. The following example from *Hikayat raja Pasai* is typical:

> **Adapun raja dalam negeri itu Sultan Muhammad namanya.** (Jones, 1999, 14)
>
> The ruler (raja) in that city is called Sultan Muhammad.

In *Hikayat raja Pasai* the title of raja continues to be used alongside the title of sultan. For example the ruler of Perlak is referred to both as *sultan Perlak* and *raja Perlak* (Jones, 1999: 17-20). The ruler of Siam however is only designated as raja (Jones, 1999: 26).

It is also interesting to note that in *Sejarah Melayu*, where the Malay ruler is invariably ascribed the title of sultan, in the episodes mentioning relations with Pasai, the Pasai ruler is referred to as both raja and as sultan:

> **Maka Orangkaya Tun Muhammad pun bermohonlah kepada sultan Pasai. Maka raja Pasai membalas surat raja Melaka.** (A. Samad Ahmad, 1979: 234)
>
> Then Chief Tun Muhammad took his leave from the sultan of Pasai. Then the ruler of Pasai replied to the letter of the ruler of Melaka.

In *Sejarah Melayu*, sultan tends to be used mostly as a title for individual rulers, whereas raja is being used much more as a generic term for kings. In addition, raja is often used as a title for male descendants of a king (Gullick, 1988: 66), thus carrying a meaning similar to prince. *Raja Muda* is the title generally ascribed to the heir apparent, however Gullick notes that the honorific carries the meaning of future ruler or junior ruler, but does not imply an automatic right to succession (Gullick, 1988: 61).

Alongside the primary titles of sultan, raja, or *yang dipertuan* there were a number of other titles and terms which were used by the Malays in addressing or

referring to their ruler. The term *paduka*[5] is applied on numerous occasions and in combination with a number of other terms. Thus for example one finds the ruler being referred to as *paduka sultan* or *paduka seri sultan*, *seri* being an honorific often prefixed to the names or descriptions of royal personages (Wilkinson, 1932: vol.2, 451). *Paduka* is also used as an additional title when referring to a sultan by name, for example Paduka Seri Sultan Mansur Syah (A. Samad Ahmad, 1979: 142). *Paduka* can also be used as an honorific for high-ranking individuals other than the ruler. Thus in *Sejarah Melayu*, the *bendahara*[6] is often referred to as *bendahara paduka raja* and in *Hikayat Hang Tuah*, Hang Jebat is given the title *paduka raja* by the ruler (Kassim Ahmad, 1975: 316)[7].

The word *syah*, deriving from the Persian for king (Wilkinson, 1932: vol. 2, 463) is used in Malay court terminology as an honorific suffix to the name of a sultan, as in the example mentioned above from *Sejarah Melayu*, Paduka Seri Sultan Mansur Syah. The expression *syah alam*, literally 'ruler of the world', is also very common in traditional Malay literature as a form of address to rulers. Sometimes it is translated as emperor (Wilkinson, 1932: vol.2, 463). Finally, the word *baginda*, deriving from the Sanskrit for blessed (Wilkinson, 1932: vol.1, 63), is frequently used in romantic literature as a title accorded to princes generally, and in historical literature for referring to rulers.

Language and ceremonial of the court

A particular language developed in the Malay courts, which was to be used when addressing the ruler, and also when a subject referred to himself in the presence of his raja or sultan. In addition there are a number of words used to describe the actions of the Malay ruler that are unique to the highest authority and differentiate the ruler from the ruled. This language is generally referred to as *bahasa dalam*, meaning the language that is spoken inside the palace (*dalam* or *istana*).

The ruler uses a number of first person pronouns implying superiority, including *aku*, *beta* and also *kita*. When addressing a ruler, a subject should refer to himself as *hamba*, literally meaning slave, while the pronoun generally used by Malays when addressing a superior would be *sahaya*[8]. *Patik* also carries an implication of

[5] *Paduka*, actually meaning footwear has come to be a form of address to a Malay ruler, 'by suggesting that a subject may presume to speak to the shoe which, like himself, is under the sultan's feet' (Wilkinson, 1932: vol. 2, 193).
[6] Usually translated as prime minister or chancellor.
[7] This combination of honorifics can also be found in *Silsilah Perak*.
[8] Often pronounced and written as *sahya* or *saya*.

inferiority[9]. *Hamba tuan* (your slave) is probably more common in letter writing. When addressing a ruler, a number of terms are used, but among the most common are *tuanku*, and *tuan hamba* both meaning 'my lord'.

A subject should not speak directly to the ruler, but should rather address himself to the dust (*duli*) under the ruler's feet. Hence such phrases as *duli baginda*, *duli yang dipertuan*, *duli paduka* are very common, often in association with the word *sembah* meaning obeisance, as it was customary to make obeisance before speaking in the presence of a Malay ruler[10]. Also linked with the *sembah*, is the term *mengadap*[11], meaning to present oneself before, or to wait on, the sultan.

The royal utterance in Malay literature is generally introduced by the word *titah*. Carrying the implication of a command, it is applied to anything that the ruler says, not only to commands (Wilkinson, 1932: vol. 2, 594). The orders of a ruler should of course always be carried out, and the word *junjung* is used to signify 'carrying out the ruler's order on one's head', that is fulfilling them. In contrast the word *sabda* also meaning to speak, is applied to the words or utterances of non-Muslim royalty or a Malay Muslim chief, but not the ruler for whom *titah* is used. The correct response to the *sabda* of a chief, would be to *membalas* or *menyahut sabda*.

There are a number of specific words used in traditional Malay to describe some particular actions of the ruler. *Santap* (to eat or to drink), replaces *makan*, *beradu* (to sleep) replaces *tidur*, *gering* (to be ill) replaces *sakit*, *mangkat* (to die) is used in place of *mati*, and *siram* (to bathe) replaces *mandi*. While commoners might be described as being *marah* i.e. angry, the loftier *murka* is used for the wrath of members of royalty. *Semayam* is used to describe the ruler sitting in state in the presence of his court. The two terms *anugerah* (to make a gift) and *kurnia* (to give favour, or to grant something) are used in literature to describe the actions of a monarch towards his people, but also the actions of God. In addition and increasingly so, both terms are used merely for the actions of a superior towards an inferior.

Gullick (1988: 45) describes how the God given power (*daulat*) of the Malay ruler is associated with certain regalia or symbols of greatness (*alat kebesaran*). The examples he lists - musical instruments, the various insignia of high office such as the sceptre and betel box, and also particular weapons - are all to be found in traditional Malay texts. The royal band or orchestra (*nobat*) is referred to quite often. The make up

[9] Also sometimes written *patek*.
[10] Skeat has described the protocol regarding the *sembah* (Skeat, 1900: 37-40).
[11] From the root *adap* or *hadap* meaning the position facing someone or something.

of the *nobat* varied from state to state[12], but in general it consisted of a number of drums of different sizes and wind instruments (generally trumpet and flute). Perhaps the most detailed description of the *nobat* in Malay literature is found in *Hikayat Patani* (Teeuw and Wyatt, vol.1, 1970: 140-145). Not only did the *nobat* play an essential role in the installation of a new ruler, but also in many other important ceremonies. Thus all types of behaviour at court had to be appropriate (*dengan sepertinya*) as dictated by rank and by *adat*.

Another important aspect of court life was the conferring of titles (*gelaran*) and rank (*pangkat*). Considerable attention is often paid in literary texts to the bestowing of new titles on subjects, these acts being often accompanied by the giving of ceremonial robes. The importance of robes in traditional Malay literature, both in terms of wearing them, and bestowing them on others, cannot be overstated. Furthermore these garments were always splendid and filled all those who saw them with amazement[13] and as such robes were a highly important symbol of rank and royal favour.

Customs and habits

Traditional Malay texts contain numerous portrayals of the leisure activities of members of the royal court, and this section will briefly consider those activities which have counterparts in the representation of the British. Descriptions of both men and women enjoying the abundance and beauty of nature are quite common. For example in *Hikayat Indraputra* we see the hero picking pomegranates and grapes by the shore of the Samudra Sea (Mulyadi, 1983:67). In the same text, Kemala Ratnasari and the *bidadari* (nymphs) that accompany her swim and play in a pool near the Samudra Sea, grooming each other and singing. In *Sejarah Melayu*, on arriving at Tanjung Bemian, Sri Tri Buana is described as having a picnic on the shore. While his wife and the other women in the party enjoyed themselves collecting shellfish and picking flowers and fruits, the men went hunting, and Sri Tri Buana managed to spear a deer (Winstedt, 1938b: 60). Hunting, and in particular the hunting of deer, is described in numerous texts. For example in *Hikayat Seri Rama,* on one expedition sambhur deer (*rusa*), barking deer (*kijang*) and mouse-deer (*pelanduk*) were hunted (Ikram, 1980: 305).

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[12] Alwi bin Sheikh Alhady has described in some detail the customs and traditions governing the playing of the *nobat* of the sultan of Riau-Lingga (1962: 78-93). See also Mohd. Taib Osman's comments on the *nobat* (1969: 123-126).

[13] See for example the description of the robes that came down to Malim Deman from his ancestors. These robes were so beautiful they could not have been made by man (*bukan buatan orang sini / buatan orang di udara*), and all who saw them were amazed (*maka heran sekalian orang yang melihat itu)* (Winstedt and Sturrock, 1961: 8-9).

A general picture of festivity and enjoyment is expressed by the stock formula *makan minum bersuka-sukaan* (eating, drinking and enjoying themselves). Sometimes this expression will be followed by a period of time, for example all night long, three days and three nights, or seven days and seven nights. Rarely is detail given of the actual food and drink consumed. Scenes of enjoyment are often further elaborated with descriptions of music (*bunyi-bunyian*), sometimes accompanied by dancing, and other pastimes. For example in *Hikayat Marakarma,* games such as top-spinning, chess and *congkak*[14] are listed (Inon Shaharuddin Abdul Rahman, 1985: 88).

Women in traditional Malay literature

Women feature prominently in a number of traditional Malay texts, most notably in *syair* such as *Syair Ken Tambuhan, Syair Bidasari* and *Syair Selindung Delima.* Typical themes in these texts include grievous wrongs being committed against the heroines who then put their faith in God while in the depths of despair, and the resulting restoration of happiness once the grievance has been righted. However for the purposes of this chapter, which will later consider relationships between British husbands and their wives, it is useful to look at a specific text, *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*[15]. Braginsky (2004: 82) has highlighted two main themes in this text, the theme of the monarch whose love for his family is so overwhelming that it leads him to violate his duty as a just ruler, and the theme of female fidelity. In *Hikayat Maharaja Ali*, we are presented with the example of Queen Hasinan. Hasinan loves her husband deeply and that love is reciprocated by Maharaja Ali. The depth of their mutual love is evident from Hasinan's praying that she be protected from the advances of Raja Serdala, and reunited with her husband, and from the prayers of Maharaja Ali that he might be reunited with his wife, albeit if only momentarily before facing death. The theme of female fidelity is developed throughout the text, moreover the relationship between husband and wife is portrayed as a true partnership, with the queen fully supportive of her husband as ruler. As Braginsky argues (2004: 87), this text should be seen as a counterpoint to the theme of female infidelity and wiliness which is common in Muslim literature generally and in Malay literature particularly. Examples of the danger of women are many in traditional Malay literature, and for this reason *Hikayat Maharaja Ali* is an important counterbalance, in which an ideal model for the relationship between king and queen, husband and wife, is revealed.

[14] A game played on a boat shaped board with 12 holes and one large hole at the end. The player who gets most shells from the smaller hole into the large hole is the winner.
[15] See Bausani (1979) for his study of the text and more specifically Braginsky (2004) for his study of the loyalty of the queen to her king, Maharaja Ali.

Summary

The above discussion has shown that the portrayal of what might be called individuals is extremely rare in traditional Malay literature. Rather the audience or reader is presented with a variety of types, with those from the court predominating. Even when it comes to rulers and princes, the main figures of authority in traditional Malay society, it is difficult to find what is recognisable as an individual portrait. Rather, as is clear from the discussion of titles, physical descriptions and clothing, characters are simply represented by a collection of prescribed, highly conventional, attributes and features. Thus an ideal ruler is portrayed through listing the ceremonial robes that he wears, the regalia of kingship that surround him, the titles that are bestowed on him, his expertise in *adat* and *adab*, and an inventory, generally far from comprehensive, of physical features. The task of the discussion below is to examine to what extent this idealistic manner of representation is used by Malay authors when portraying the British. Were the British recognised as being distinctly different from the Malay individuals that had been portrayed thus far, which would suggest an engagement with difference, and an entry into dialogue with the foreign 'other'? Or was the encounter monological, drawing on the formulae and motifs of traditional Malay literature in order to portray British individuals in the image of the Malays?

Portrayals of British individuals

More than a hundred British individuals are named in the Malay texts discussed in this thesis. There are also a large number of nameless British characters that feature in one way or another. Before considering what it is that we are told about them, it is important to consider the particular types of situations that prompted Malay writers to include these foreign individuals in their narratives. For if we can gain an understanding of the motivations for recording the existence and activities of these people, this will help us to understand why certain types of individuals tended to receive more attention than others, and why particular characteristics are mentioned by a variety of authors, whereas others remain as if unnoticed. We should also consider that Malay authors were not always first hand witnesses of the events they portrayed and may not have known personally the British individuals mentioned. Thus, while Abdullah was certainly acquainted with many of the individuals he wrote about, we do not know whether Raja Ali Haji ever set eyes on the British involved in the establishment of the settlement on Singapore. The author of *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau* states several

times in his poem that he did not accompany the expedition that he describes, and that the *syair* is based on the accounts of witnesses. Thus while some authors could draw on their personal observations, others had to rely on second hand reports, and perhaps also the general opinions and stereotypes current in their respective societies at the time of writing.

By the early twentieth century, the British presence in the Malay world was made up of fairly large numbers of men, women and children. While many men were in government employment, there were also a whole variety of private individuals making a living in the region. However the variety of British individuals mentioned in Malay literature is far more limited. As noted in Chapter One, Van der Linden commented that Malays only mentioned Europeans when they could not be avoided. In this light it can be observed that many of the texts, particularly those from the early part of the nineteenth century, link the British with military conflicts, whether they be launching an invasion (*Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*, *Syair Inggeris menyerang kota*), or supporting certain players in local conflicts (*Hikayat Palembang*, *Syair perang Menteng*, *Syair Mukomuko)*. In *Tuhfat al-nafis* and *Hikayat Pahang*, the British are only mentioned when they become involved in local matters, whether that be stamping out piracy, or establishing an adviser to the sultan. Abdullah's *Hikayat Abdullah* and Ahmad Rijaluddin's *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* are different in that the scope of interest of these authors is wider. Their motivations for writing seem to have been on the suggestion of Europeans, and the intention was to describe the world around them; though it is apparent that the two authors responded to similar challenges in different ways. The eulogistic texts, such as *Syair Tuan Hampris*, or the various texts commemorating the jubilees of British monarchs, are obviously much more focused on particular British individuals than most of the texts discussed. But here too the authors were selective with regard to the features of those individual officials and rulers, which for whatever reason they considered worthy of description. Thus we can notice that generally texts mentioning the British concentrated on events that had local impact and implications. Inevitably military conflicts and changes in the style of governance as a result of the increasing colonial presence were common factors that determined the appearance of the British in nearly all the texts considered in this study.

Categories of British individuals

Considering that Malay authors were generally concerned with portraying the British in relation to military conflict and the impact on indigenous systems of governance, it is not surprising that the vast majority of British personages depicted in Malay texts are rulers, military personnel, or government officials, usually of high rank. Thus in texts from the early nineteenth century the prevalent type of individuals included such figures as Raffles, Lord Minto, Farquhar and Gillespie, men who either led military campaigns, or occupied the topmost position in a particular settlement. It was they who normally were known by name or title to the local population. This pattern of attention to only the most influential Britons continues in *Syair Tuan Hampris* with its heed paid to Mr Humphreys, the British Resident in Trengganu. Likewise in *Hikayat Pahang*, the British individuals named include Governor Harry Ord, Governor Sanderworth, Selangor Resident Davidson, Perak Resident Swettenham, Governor Weld, and Pahang Government Agent Hugh Clifford. These men are mentioned in *Hikayat Pahang* because of their high status and their direct interaction with Malay rulers and officials in Pahang. The author of *Hikayat Pahang*, seeking to explain the emergence of Pahang as a distinct sultanate, could not avoid mentioning such officials. However, despite their occurrence in that text, we learn almost nothing of them except for their names, titles and positions. While certain authors invariably give the name of the British officials that enter their narratives, on some occasions only the title is used. Thus only by resort to external sources can the actual identity of numerous *jenderal Inggeris*, *residen Inggeris* and *opsir Inggeris* be known. Only in the works of Abdullah and his son Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi, is a broader range of British officials present. What is more, in those authors' works more personal features of the British are occasionally portrayed[16].

The British monarchy features in a number of compositions, most obviously in the 'jubilee' texts. In these texts, British monarchs, whether Victoria or George V are named and eulogised. In texts such as *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar,* Queen Victoria is named, and there is also mention of the duke of Edinburgh[17] and the prince of Wales[18]. The British king[19] is even mentioned though not specifically named in *Hikayat peperangan al-Maulana Sultan Istambul dengan raja Rusyin.* In *Hikayat Pahang*, the closing pages include reference to King Edward. Abdullah also refers to

[16] For example, in Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi's *Pelayaran,* the author's travels with Irving, the Straits Auditor-General, led to various insights into the British official's character, in terms of his negotiating skills, and his drunkenness.
[17] Queen Victoria's second son, Alfred (1844-1900).
[18] Queen Victoria's eldest son, Albert Edward (1841-1910), the future King Edward VII.
[19] It should be noted that the British king would in actual fact have been a queen at time of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78.

Queen Victoria, though only towards the end of *Hikayat Abdullah,* and again only in passing. However as has already been noted in Chapter Three, with the world-view of certain authors sometimes not reaching beyond the Malay world, and sometimes only as far as India, the British monarchy is, more often than not, most noticeable by its absence. In texts such as *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* and *Hikayat Palembang*, it is the *raja Benggala* who is characterised as the highest British authority, and on occasion there does seem to be confusion as to whether he is an official or a monarch. The depiction of Lord Minto is the case in point and it will be discussed separately below.

Missionaries and teachers may be seen as a particular category, due to the educational role that they often played in the Malay world. These individuals come to the fore in the works of Abdullah, particularly in his *hikayat.* Abdullah was very much involved with missionaries, due to his work as their teacher of Malay, and as a teacher in their schools. He was also engaged in early printing and publishing in Melaka and Singapore, which were again closely connected with the activities of missionaries. Therefore Abdullah gives various details relating to Milne and the American missionary Alfred North. Keasberry, a British missionary who founded a Malay school in Singapore, is mentioned in *Hikayat Abdullah* just as in the works of Muhamed Salleh bin Perang and Na Tian Piet due to his having been a teacher to Sultan Abu Bakar of Johor.

Other British individuals make numerous appearances in Malay literature, but generally they remain nameless and in the background. There are the drunken British soldiers in Melaka of *Hikayat Abdullah*, and the unnamed British soldiers who kill or get killed in the various texts recounting the expeditions in Java and Sumatra. So too there is the assortment of British sailors who traded goods with the indigenous population, such as those nameless ships' captains who exchanged arms for tin in *Misa Melayu* and *Cerita Bangka.* Only when they become key figures of the narrative, do they receive individual names. Such is the case, for example, with Captain Forrest in *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* whose purchase of goods from Nakhoda Muda leads to the hero falling out of favour with the Dutch. Likewise Captain Glass and Captain Geddes are referred to in *Tuhfat al-nafis* because of their involvement in events which are perceived as having possibly led to Riau's misfortune.

Aspects of individual portraiture

While most British individuals mentioned in Malay literature are depicted with minimal detail, we can nonetheless observe that there were various aspects of their characters and behaviour that attracted the attention of Malay authors. By drawing on the whole corpus of texts under study, certain commonalities can be remarked upon. Therefore this section will survey some of the most striking aspects of the representation of the British before moving on to consider the portrayal of four particular individuals more closely.

Clothing and appearance

Aside from the general term of *orang putih* (white man) Malay authors, with the exception of Abdullah, do not seem to have found the looks of the British as particularly worthy of depiction in their literature. The lack of portraits of the British is not surprising for, as has already been noted above, traditional Malay literature is also notable for its lack of portraits of Malay individuals. The aspect of appearance that is touched on is clothing and in particular uniforms that are linked to rank and ceremony. These are features that had long attracted the attention of authors of traditional Malay texts, who would often portray their characters simply by describing the variety of ceremonial robes worn by them. The specific nature of this interest is most evident in Abdullah's writing, for while he describes the official attire of several British men, normally on the occasion of their first arrival in Singapore or Melaka, there is little attention given to less formal dress. His descriptions of the British officers' uniforms, some with tiger skins, others with hats with black and pink feathers, some with trousers of animal skin and tunics made of cloth striped like a tiger's fur, is typical of his interest in more flamboyant clothing that signifies rank. Indeed Abdullah was disappointed by the plainness of Minto's attire, a tunic of black cloth, black trousers, and nothing else apparently worthy of mention. We can suspect that Minto's garb failed to match the expectations of something opulent and luxurious so characteristic for traditional literary imagery.

One item of clothing that seems to have attracted the attention of Malay authors more than most is the hat. Wearing of hats, and in particular taking them off when speaking to a superior, is a European custom that is frequently remarked upon. For example in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi,* when officers reported to Lord Minto they always took off their hats *(menyabut capiyau dari kepala).* Abdullah reports that as Minto travelled around Melaka greeting people he held his hat in his hand, waving it

back and forth. When recording the attack on Farquhar by a tiger, Abdullah comments that the British official returned to town bareheaded, the tiger having managed to catch his hat! (*Maka tertangkaplah kepada cipiau raja itu, lalu dibawanya lari. Maka raja pun selamatlah ia samapi ke Melaka, dengan bergundul;* Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 67).

Manners and habits

Those mannerisms of British individuals that tend to be remarked upon are connected with more formal situations. The shaking of hands when British individuals greeted each other was noted by several authors. So too encounters between Malays and British are occasionally recounted as commencing with the customary handshake (*bergoncang tangan),* as we see for example in *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar,* when the duke of Sutherland greeted the Johor ruler (M.A. Fawzi Basri, 1983: 78). Shaking hands is also described by Abdullah, for example in the scenes where Gillespie and Auchmuty arrive from Bengal and when Raffles meets with Tengku Panglima Besar.

The reddening of the face, which Van der Linden highlights as a feature of the portrayal of Europeans by Malays, is certainly not as common in the depiction of the British as it was in the representation of the Dutch. This may well be due to the far smaller number of texts that describe military conflicts involving the British than is the case with the Dutch. We can nonetheless see this feature in Abdullah's portrayal of Raffles. Much more likely when describing the hearing of bad news or something unexpected, is that the British will be described as demonstrating the emotions that are well known to traditional literature. Thus British individuals might be startled (*terkejut*) or occasionally angry (*marah*). There are also numerous occasions when a somewhat curious smile (*tersenyum*) is drawn on the faces of the British[20]. Generally however, if the conduct and manners of British individuals are mentioned, with the exception of Abdullah's writing, we tend to find only the exemplary qualities typical of traditional Malay literature. Individuals are described as generous, wise, intelligent, speaking gently etc. Very rarely is something more to be gleaned, and an excellent example is found in *Hikayat Pahang*. Its author describes a speech given by Hugh Clifford in response to a letter read out by Haji Muhammad Nor:

> **Kemudian berdiri Tuan Hugh Clifford membalas ucapan yang kedua tiada dengan surat, dengan surat di mulut sahaja, dengan panjang percakapannya seperti ditulis, tersangatlah elok, manis madah yang dihuraikan itu, di dalam**

[20] See Koster (1997) for his discussion of these ambiguous smiles (*tersenyum*) in traditional Malay literature. It should also be noted that a Javanese can express anger with a smile.

> **majlis orang beribu-ribu, pandai karang-mengarang, puji-memuji dengan peraturan seperti ditulis di dalam hatinya dengan tiada singgung atau gamam percakapan Melayu Pahang.** (Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 142)
>
> Then Mr Hugh Clifford responded with the second speech, though this was not written, rather the words came directly from his tongue, though the speech was long it was as though it had been first written down. His words were beautiful and the utterances that he let forth were sweet. In the assembly hall in front of thousands of people, he arranged his words carefully, praising with words which were as though they had been written in his heart, and never tripping or mumbling over the speech in Pahang Malay.

Clifford is not only praised for his command of the Malay language, his beautiful and sweet words and so on, but his lack of reliance on the written word is also commended. The command of language is extremely important according to Malay conventions, and the move to reading speeches written in advance is clearly seen as the less preferred option. Clifford is not at all unique for the praise he earns for his apparent behaviour in accordance with traditional Malay ideals. Almost without exception, if any comments are made, then they are positive.

Abdullah is perhaps unique for his more realistic and individualised descriptions of British officials. In particular his observations on Crawfurd are notable for their being at variance with Malay expectations and ideals:

> **Bermula, adalah kulihat tabiat Tuan Crawfurd itu tiada ia menaruh sabar, maka dengan segera ia marah dan lagi barang suatu perbuatannya itu berlambatan tiada dengan segera, dan lagi iaitu tinggi hematnya serta dengan pandainya lagi dan berilmu, tetapi sungguhpun demikian adalah iaitu cenderong kepada kekayaan dunia dan lagi tangannya singkat, ia membesarkan diri dan lagi tabiatnya tiada kuasa menengar pengaduan yang lanjut dan lagi tiada ia kuasa memeriksai akan hal-ihwal orang, disukainya perkataan ringkas, dipotong2nya ditengah2. Maka adapun kesukaan orang Melayu dan bangsa yang di bawah angin ini semuanya suka perkataan yang lanjut2 dan berulang2 perkataan. Maka sebab itulah kudengar kebanyakan orang Melayu dan Cina bersungut karena tiada puas hati mereka itu dan rasanya tiada ia menerima hukuman itu dengan suka hatinya melainkan seperti dipaksa juga adanya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 296-297)
>
> I observed that Mr Crawfurd's nature was inclined to impatience and bursts of temper. He worked slowly, without hurrying. He was conscientious and able, and he was clever and knowledgeable. However in spite of this he was fond of material wealth. He was tight fisted and gave himself airs. His temperament meant that he was intolerant of listening to wordy complaints. Nor did he have the ability to enquire fully into people's affairs. He preferred short statements of fact, and he would cut people off mid-sentence. The Malays and other races that live in the East enjoy long speeches and repetition. Because of this I heard many Malays and Chinese complaining that their course of action had not been arrived at with their own consent, but rather had been dictated to them. (cf. Hill, 1970: 223)

Such a description is rare, but is also illuminating for it highlights the type of behaviour that upset and disappointed local inhabitants. The apparent failure of Crawfurd to behave according to Malay expectations did little to enhance his popularity.

One aspect of British behaviour that does seem to recur in Malay texts is the British use of chairs. For example in both Abdullah's and Raja Ali Haji's descriptions of the meeting between Farquhar, Tengku Long and Raffles in Singapore, specific reference is made to the chairs that they sat on. When describing his wedding party, to which a large number of white men and their wives were invited, Abdullah specifically comments that the tables and chairs were all provided by Milne and his colleagues (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 153).

Recreational habits

Descriptions of the recreational or 'outside office' behaviour of the British are fairly sporadic and range from more traditional activities, which would be quite familiar to Malay audiences, to other pastimes that were more unusual. Some of the earliest examples come from Ahmad Rijaluddin's description of Bengal. For example Lord Minto is described as often amusing himself by taking afternoon strolls in the grounds of his palace, where he would pick flowers and fruit, and occasionally catch fish from the water tank (*maka baginda pun keluar pergi bermain2 di kolam itu dan serta mengentas bunga bungaan dan mengambil buah buahan berjalanlah baginda raja bermain, dan beberapa kali mengail ikan yang di dalam kolam itu;* Skinner, 1982: 42-4). Similarly in the Company's park British individuals of all ranks would enjoy themselves on non-working days (*hari kesukaan*), by catching fish from tanks, using a net or a line. Certainly these descriptions seem as fitting of Malay princes in fantastic adventure *hikayat* as they do of British military officers.

Ahmad also describes a hunt with hundreds of hunting dogs and dignitaries on horseback riding in pursuit of mouse-deer. This style of hunting is immediately recognisable as a British pursuit. However, as Skinner notes (1982:161), while there was certainly hunting with dogs, there is little evidence that the British in India hunted mouse-deer in this way. As we know from traditional Malay literature, hunting was also a pastime enjoyed by Malay rulers and their followers. Images of rulers on horseback, with dogs running alongside in pursuit of diverse game including various types of deer, but in particular the mouse-deer, are commonly to be found in a variety of Malay texts. Considering the mention of hundreds of dogs, Ahmad's description seems to be based on some sort of eyewitness account, but nevertheless he follows a literary model that has clear Malay roots, only slightly modifying it. It is unlikely that Ahmad saw mouse-deer being hunted, but perhaps he felt the expectations of his readers would be better suited by using the name of a familiar animal.

In *Hikayat Abdullah* most of the high officials are noted for their daily walks or rides. For example Abdullah describes Farquhar as taking a walk along the Rochor River in Singapore, and apparently in Melaka he was in the habit of taking a ride on horseback or in a carriage after his afternoon meal[21]. He also mentions that the open land where the British church was built in Singapore, had previously been used for horse racing, and as a place where white men used to go for strolls (*tempat orang berlumba2kan kuda dan pada petang2 orang2 putih pergi kesitu mengambil2 angin*; Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 379). While Abdullah does not describe the horse races themselves, Na Tian Piet gives a brief description of a day at the races attended by the Johor Sultan, Abu Bakar, together with the visiting prince of Wales and his brother (*melihat kuda berlumba lari*). We are told that the sultan owned a great many horses and the occasion provides an opportunity for the author to show the sultan's Britishness. Na Tian Piet remarks that Sultan Abu Bakar had a fondness for betting on horses, which is described as a white man's pastime rather than the traditional Malay passions of betting on cock-fighting (Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 120).

While in *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala,* Europeans, including the British, are portrayed as watching Indians dressed as women, and indeed enjoying the event so much that they too joined in the singing and dancing (Skinner, 1982: 116-8), in other texts we see descriptions which stress difference rather than similarity between British and Malay recreation. In *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor*, Na Tian Piet gives a very detailed picture of a party he attended, which was held by Sultan Abu Bakar on 14 January 1895 (Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 41-58). Four hundred European men and two hundred European women attended the party. Na Tian Piet describes many of the European men as entering the room arm in arm with their wives (*banyak yang datang bersama isteri / dikepit tangannya di sebelah kiri*) and wearing beautiful clothing, an indication of their intention of dancing (*elok pakaiannya tiada terperi / maksudnya datang mahu menari*). The dancing of the Europeans, more than two hundred having taken to the floor, was an astonishing sight for Arab and Chinese onlookers. Not just did the Europeans steal the show as they spun hither and thither (*berpusing-pusing ke sana ke mari*) so that the other guests just stood and watched, but the division between the different groups is strengthened by the author's comment that while the Europeans were dancing, many of the Arabs and Malays sat playing the card game 'twenty one'! The closing lines of *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau*

[21] The purpose of the anecdote is to tell of the presence of crocodiles rather than to illustrate Farquhar's habits, for Abdullah reports that Farquhar's dog was unfortunately being eaten by one (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 210). Farquhar was quite unlucky with his excursions, for on an earlier jaunt on horseback, he was apparently attacked by a tiger (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 66).

also stress difference or 'otherness' with the description of Raffles and his wife and other Europeans dancing in an upright fashion[22].

Perhaps the most obvious attempt to demonstrate knowledge of the British and their recreational habits comes in *Syair Tuan Hampris*. While the games are only listed in the *syair* without further elaboration, the inclusion of golf and cricket in this list is evidence of the author's effort to show her understanding of the 'otherness' of Humphreys and the British.

Alcohol and drunkenness

British drunkenness is a topic that arises from time to time in the texts in question, though not perhaps as much as one might expect. The images of drunken British sailors and officials was generally, as might be expected, a far from attractive spectacle in the eyes of the Malay writers. Ahmad Rijaluddin gives several accounts of drunkenness, which, given his taste for the sleazier aspects of city life, is perhaps only natural.

Abdullah writes that his early experience of the British was to witness the arrival of drunken sailors in Melaka causing havoc around the town, to the extent that mothers would quieten their crying children with the threat of a visit by a drunken British sailor. He also records that women could not walk in the streets when the British were in town due to their unruly drunken loutishness. The drunkenness was apparently so prevalent that Abdullah quips that at that time he had never met a Briton with a white face, his only encounters being with drunks[23].

In Abdullah's account of his friendship with the British pilot, Mr Smith, one of the qualities that apparently set this man apart from ordinary seamen, was that he was not inclined to drunkenness. He also notes that Raffles kept spirit, perhaps *arak* or brandy, in order to preserve wildlife specimens. Na Tian Piet, who as a Christian had less reason to be intolerant of alcohol, describes Europeans and Chinese drinking whisky, brandy and soda at one of the parties thrown by Sultan Abu Bakar (*Banjak Toean toean serta Tjina / banjak jang minoem matjam warna / wiskij brendi soda ada disana;* Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 316). Indeed all types of drink were available to meet

[22] *Segala orang putih tegak menari / madam dan tuan beberapa laki-laki* (Raimy Ché-Ross, 2003: 61).
[23] Abdullah uses the unusual expression that the British were 'all riding a green horse, that is drunk' (*sekaliannya naik atas kuda hijau ya'ni mabuk*; Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 70).

each individual's requirements (*segala minoeman ada samoanja / apa kita minta dibrikan nja*).

One peculiar story by Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi reveals that alcohol was certainly around the British, though rarely commented upon. Mohamed Ibrahim (Sweeney and Phillips, 1975: 118) records that Mr Irving had fallen asleep in the sun on board ship. Apparently he was affected by sunstroke, for when he woke up he stood shaking uncontrollably and seized a nearby bottle of brandy and went to drink its entire contents, though luckily the ship's mate stopped him, giving him water instead. Mohamed Ibrahim is critical of alcohol elsewhere in his account of his voyages where he relates how the Penangites (*orang Pinang*) pressured him to drink port. He refused to join in on religious grounds and noted regretfully that such habits were also becoming popular in Singapore (Sweeney and Phillips, 1975: 99-100).

Religion and church-going

While it is difficult to doubt that Malay authors knew about the religious beliefs of the British (at least to the extent that they were different from those of the Malays), British religious activity is generally absent from Malay texts. While it could be argued that this absence is indicative of Malay reluctance to mention foreign belief systems, perhaps a better explanation is that the religious activity of the British was rarely relevant to the stories that Malay authors wished to tell. Ence' Amin is an exception, since in *Syair perang Mengkasar* he described the British factors as overbearing infidels (*kafir yang bengis*). However, as Skinner argues, this was not so much an insult as a straightforward descriptive term (Skinner, 1963: 11). Ahmad Rijaluddin portrays church-going on a few occasions. For example he describes the British church in Hugli, complete with a fine bell-tower.

> **Maka tatkala hari Ahad maka berhimpunlah segala Inglan dan Pertugal daripada lakilaki dan perempuan sekalian pergi menyembah pada gereja itu maka terlalulah gempita bunyi baca masing2 demikianlah segala Keristi itu.** (Skinner, 1982: 134)
>
> On Sundays the British and Portuguese, men and women alike, go to the church to worship and these Christians make a great deal of noise as they recite their prayers.

Abdullah mentions the building of churches and chapels in Melaka and Singapore. He also discusses the translation of the Bible and other Christian texts into Malay, on which he worked. However his discussion mainly centres on the difficulties he met in translating the texts, and in particular his difficulties with Thomsen. We can

also remember the concern of Abdullah's father that his mixing with missionaries might lead him to stray from his Islamic faith, an idea which Abdullah himself considered to be ridiculous.

Na Tian Piet describes Mr Cook's efforts to have two churches built in the sultan's territory, one in Johor and another in Muar. Not only did the sultan grant his permission, but also the author reports that such was his generosity that all costs were borne by Abu Bakar. Na Tian Piet adds that the two churches were Protestant, and attracted Christian followers. Mr Cook, the *toean pandita*[24] is listed as the head of the churches (*kedoea gredja nja itoe poela, toean pandita ini jang djadi kepala*). Also, as will be discussed in the section on Keasberry below, Na Tian Piet records that the British teacher actually died while in church.

Titles

Generally Malay authors seem to have been quick to pick up on the various titles used by the British. While *tuan* was a term used by Malays in addressing their colonial masters, so too British terminology was adopted for this purpose, though often with a variety of spellings. Thus titles such as governor, major, resident, colonel, secretary, governor-general, agent, and adviser[25] all found their way into Malay texts[26]. Indeed more often than not these titles were used without specifically naming the respective British individuals. In many texts therefore it is necessary to refer to outside sources to establish the identity of the individual in question, if that is required. Generally however, we must assume that the identity of those unnamed officials was not particularly important for the intended Malay audience. Rather, the important fact was that the order was given, or a visit was paid by, a figure of the colonial power, for example, a British governor[27]. As has already been noted the Malay title of 'raja' was occasionally ascribed to British individuals. In the first part of this chapter we have discussed the designation of raja as a title used by Malays for their rulers, princes and other members of royal families. It is difficult to be certain whether in using the term raja, the Malay author understood the British official as occupying the same position as an indigenous

[24] Also referred to as *pandita Prodestant*.
[25] In *Syair Tuan Hampris* both the form derived from English (*adbiser*) and its Malay equivalent (*tuan penasihat*) are used.
[26] In *Syair Tuan Hampris*, when recording the arrival of Mr Humphreys, the author first states that a white man came, and then in the subsequent line that this man was known as the British agent *(Orang putih baharu datang berulang / British agen disebut orang)*. These lines suggest two levels of understanding and identification of Humphreys by the local population. First and foremost he was simply a white man (*orang putih*), however the proper term for his position was that of British agent.
[27] In the same way that we can often read in traditional Malay texts of the *raja Cina*, without any indication of the particular Chinese ruler intended.

raja. However this was probably the only choice he had, moreover the term sultan could not be applied to British rulers. Such use of the term raja is more common in the texts coming from the early nineteenth century or before, consequently the move away from this term towards specific British titles, might be seen as a reflection of a greater understanding of its inappropriateness on the part of Malay authors and the need for more specific designations to describe the British colonial hierarchy.

Certain texts from the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century give accounts of the awarding of British honours to officials, both British and Malay. For example in *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar*, it is recorded that the C.M.G[28]. was awarded to two Johor officials (M.A. Fawzi Basri, 1983: 69). From Na Tian Piet's *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor*, we learn that Sultan Abu Bakar received two medals from the British queen and one from the prince of Wales, in addition to medals from seven other rulers (Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 316). The same text informs us that the British queen gave Sultan Abu Bakar his title of sultan, having previously been known as maharaja (*Permaisoeri Enggeris membri pangkat / Sekarang sultan pangkat jang lekat*; Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 331). Interestingly in *Hikayat Pahang*, no letters after names are mentioned until almost the very end of the text,[29] where the author gives letters after the names of High Commissioner Swettenham and Resident-General Tuan W. Treacher (G.C.M.G. and K.C.M.G.[30] respectively). The author's intentions are revealed a little later in the narrative, however, when it is recorded that Pahang Sultan Ahmad al-Muazzam Syah was given a medal with the title K.C.M.G. by Treacher, which came on the order of His Majesty King Edward (*Yang Maha Mulia lagi maha besar King Edward*; Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 144-5). It seems that the author made a particular effort to show that the Pahang sultan received the title of the same rank as Treacher, and that the title came from King Edward himself. While the ruler would undoubtedly have considered himself as having higher rank than the British resident-general, the account seems to be acknowledging that they stood on the same level, according to the British colonial government. What is more, Swettenham's G.C.M.G was a more prestigious honour than the sultan's[31].

[28] C.M.G., Companion of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.
[29] See Kalthum Jeran, 1986: 144-148.
[30] G.C.M.G Knight of the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. K.C.M.G., Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George. Both were awards for service in British colonies and foreign nations.
[31] In the closing lines of *Hikayat Pahang*, following the death of Sultan Ahmad, no such title seems to have been awarded to his successor Sultan Mahmud, however Mahmud's successor was awarded the K.C.M.G by the prince of Wales in 1922.

Portrayals of British women

With a few notable exceptions, British women have little place in the narratives of Malay authors[32]. Given that most portrayals of British individuals centre on military conflicts, trade, the decision-making related to the governance of Malay states, and public scandals caused by individuals of lower status, then the relative paucity of portrayals of British women is easy to understand. From the seventeenth to the early twentieth century, while the presence of British women in the Malay world gradually increased, they normally arrived there as wives of officials. However by the early twentieth century women did come to the region in their own right as low-ranking bureaucrats etc. and yet with the exception of Abdullah, whose interests were far wider than those of the other authors, Malay writers had little reason or opportunity to incorporate British women into their works.

Nonetheless, sporadic accounts of British women are found in a few texts, and while generally brief, they do give interesting glimpses as to how British women were perceived in the Malay world. Ahmad Rijaluddin gives the following description of British women enjoying their leisure in Bengal:

> **Maka sekalian puteri2 Inglan turun mandi pada kolam itu bersembur2an bersukaan terlalulah ramainya, seperti bidadari Sekerba turun mandi di kolam anta beranta demikianlah lakunya ada yang berenang memintas susur kolam itu ada yang mandi berlimau terlalulah ramainya. Maka adalah pulak di susur taman itu ditanamnya bunga2an berbanjaran seperti diatur rupanya serba aneka jenis daripada bungaan. Setelah sudah mandi bersiram maka naiklah segala puteri2 itu mengentas bunga2an ada yang mengentas bunga air mawar ada yang mengentas bunga cempaka kuning dan cempaka gading.** (Skinner, 1982: 76-78)
>
> Then all the British girls come down to bathe in the tank, groups of them splashing about and playing, looking just like the nymph Sekerba bathing in the tank in Cloudland. Some of them swim down the side of the tank, some scrub themselves with limes, with a great noise. Around the edges of the garden there are rows of various sorts of flowers planted. After bathing the girls get out of the pool and pick the flowers, some of them pick roses, some pick ivory chempakas.

This extremely formulaic description is clearly reminiscent of scenes from traditional Malay texts. Hadijah Rahmat (2001: 191) draws our attention to the similarities with a scene from *Hikayat Panji Semirang*, and there are also strong resonances of the scene from *Hikayat Indraputra* where princess Kemala Ratnasari and seven other nymphs bathe in a pool near the Samudra Sea, secretly watched by Indraputra (Mulyadi, 1983:

[32] One obvious exception to this is the presence of Queen Victoria. Malay portraits of this British monarch will be discussed separately below, suffice it to say at this point that her gender is not particularly remarked upon by Malay writers, to the extent that in two texts she is described as a king rather than a queen. It is her position as monarch that counted.

70-71). Ahmad's description is not only formulaic but also repetitive[33], and as a result we can learn very little of the writer's impressions of British women from it.

When one considers these scenes of girls bathing, the descriptions of local women and the repeated mention of brothels in Bengal, it is clear that Ahmad was certainly somewhat preoccupied with the erotic. Indeed Hadijah Rahmat (2001: 184) sees these portrayals as 'comparatively explicit and radical compared to conventional writings of the period'. However given the above examples of similar images of women bathing from traditional literature, it is difficult to argue that Ahmad 'was radical'. Rather it seems that Ahmad was actually constrained by his tradition to the extent that he could find no fresh words or images to describe the scenes that obviously fascinated him. Rather than presenting the women of different nationalities with particular traits and characteristics, he could only portray them as the traditional Malay literary imagination dictated. There is one exception to this formulaic writing, however, which gives us a momentary glimpse of Ahmad's real taste in women. Ahmad compares the looks of British girls with those of locally-born French girls at Chandernagore:

> **Maka segala puteri Inglan sungguhpun putih terlalulah amat putihnya dan segala rambut pun merah, adalah terkurang laksananya. Dan segala puteri Ferangsih peranakan negeri itu putih kuning[34] sadu perdana dan rambutnya amat lagi hitam dan giginya seperti biji delima rupanya. ... Jika orang tiada beberapa tetap hatinya menjadi gila kesmaran daripada sangat indah2 rupanya tiadalah berbanding.** (Skinner, 1982: 110)
>
> All the British girls are white skinned, really too white, and their hair is brown, and so they are lacking something. But the locally born French girls have wonderful creamy skin and black hair, and their teeth are like pomegranate seeds. ... If anyone were not steadfast in his feelings, then he would be mad with love [for them] because of their incomparable beauty.

Whereas Ahmad finds the British girls a little too pale for his liking, the French girls seem more in accordance with his type, and that type clearly owes much to the traditional ideal of beauty. The use of traditional formulae in likening their teeth to pomegranate seeds is particularly suggestive of this ideal which had little to do with the reality. However with the main features of traditional portraiture in mind, we can easily recognise in this style of description a continuation of use of a set of disparate traits which, albeit clearly far from realistic, when assembled together represented the ideal of female beauty in its entirety.

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[33] Descriptions of British women enjoying the water in Acanak and Damdama are virtually the same. Similar language is also used to portray Indian girls bathing at Marjasani and Portuguese girls at Balagar (Skinner, 1982: 84,86,132,138).

[34] *Putih kuning* is a term common in traditional Malay literature, which is sometimes used in *pantun* as a metaphor for a beauty.

However this is not all there is to it. While dominated by traditional conventions, the above passage is remarkable for its attention to difference. In noting that the British girls did not meet the traditional ideal of beauty, Ahmad specifically chooses to portray difference, or 'otherness', rather than simply impose old literary conventions on subjects who did not entirely correspond to this ideal. By way of contrast it is interesting to note that Na Tian Piet described a wife of Sultan Abu Bakar as being like a European (Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 317). Not only was she apparently not at all fat (*badan nja gemoek tiada brapa*) but also she was very white, her facial beauty being incomparable (*roepa Permeisoeri sangatlah poeti / elok paras nja tiadalah seperti*). For Na Tian Piet at least, concepts of female beauty had been transformed by the European encounter[35].

The anonymous author of *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau* seems to have been quite intrigued by a particular British woman, Raffles' wife[36]. While he scatters only a few etchings of her into the text, they nonetheless come together to create something of a coherent picture of the official's wife. The text tells of Raffles' expedition into the Minangkabau highlands. On this trip, which was by all accounts somewhat arduous, he was accompanied by his wife. The author writes that, when prior to commencing the journey inland, she arrived with her husband in Padang, the accomplished and well-bred lady was neither alarmed by nor afraid of the crowds (*madamnya yang bistari / sedikit tidak gentar dan ngeri*). Despite the terrible weather on the journey, Lady Raffles' progress was quick and her speech correct (*kerjanya lekas katanya benar*). Also we are told how she stood on the boat while crossing a river, with officials supporting her on each side. On being met by a group of women on the journey, Lady Raffles gave money to them all, winning their praises, and earning the comment from the author that she was both brave and generous. Just as the British lady and her husband progressed together, so later in the poem it is described how they ate

[35] Sultan Abu Bakar had four wives in all. His first marriage was in 1858 to Che' Wan Chik binti Raja Bendahara Tun Muhammad Tahir, *Che' Puan Besar* (*b.* 1843), daughter of Tun Muhammad Mutahir bin Raja Bendahara 'Ali. In 1870 he married his second wife, Che' Zubaidah binti 'Abdu'llah, *Che' Puan Besar* (born in Bali, 1849; died at Johor Bahru, 1936), née Cecilia Catherina Lange, daughter of Mads Johansen Lange, a Danish citizen resident in Bali, by Nonya Sangnio, daughter of the Captain China of Kuta. His third marriage was in 1885 to Che' Puan Fatima binti 'Abdu'llah [H.H. Sultana Fatima] (died in Singapore, 1891), daughter of the Orang Kaya of Ringgit. His fourth wife was of Turkish origin, Khadija Khanum [H.H. Sultana Khadija] (died 1st February 1904,), crowned *Sultana of Johor* on 28th February 1894. This final marriage was on 22nd September 1893. (<RA> <http://www.4dw.net/royalark/Malaysia/johor8.htm> 01 October 2004). The party described in the *syair* was held on 14 January 1895, and the queen was apparently 30 years of age. Thus the wife in question is probably not the half-Danish second wife, but rather the fourth Turkish wife. For photographs of the sultana of Johor see Falconer (1987: 151, 164). Na Tian Piet was perhaps quite generous in his description of her beauty, though considering the Turkish lady's relatively pale complexion and European style dress, we can perhaps understand the author's view that she looked European.

[36] Raffles' second wife Sophia Raffles, whom he married in 1817.

together. In many respects we learn more about Lady Raffles than we do about Raffles himself, whose presentation in this *syair* will be discussed in a separate section. In fact what is perhaps most revealing in this portrayal of Lady Raffles is the author's preoccupation with a European woman, strong and determined, travelling along with the expedition. The relationship with her husband, supportive and sharing, was also seen as being noteworthy by the author. Thus it is her very presence, and the nature of her relationship with her husband, that drew the attention of the author and his informants, for whom, one might presume, such a prolonged opportunity to observe a European woman would still have been something of a novelty.

Abdullah also paid heed to Raffles' wives, particularly to his first wife Olivia[37]. While Abdullah names several other British and American women in his text including the wife of Butterworth, Mrs Milne[38], Mrs Keasberry[39], Mrs Tracy and Mrs North, these women are generally mentioned in passing, and with little description or analysis of their character[40]. Describing Olivia Raffles, Abdullah finds her to be an exceptional woman. As he explains on introducing her into the narrative, 'I observed that the character of his wife was not like that of ordinary women' (*sebagai lagi kulihat kelakuan isterinya itupun bukan barang2 perepmuan*). Abdullah writes that, like her husband, she was charming, modest and prudent. She was friendly to people regardless of rank, and was interested in things Malay, noting many facts down on paper. Also Abdullah observes that when Raffles wished to buy something he would always consult his wife. Her nature was to be always busy. Thus Raffles and his wife were a team, they took decisions together, and they shared common interests. She revealed characteristics that were reserved only for men in traditional Malay literature, and it seems that Abdullah saw much in her example to be admired.

Abdullah's view on gender roles, brought about by his acquaintance with Raffles and his wife, becomes apparent in the next section where he compares Olivia Raffles with Malay woman of high birth (Datoek Besar dan Roolvink, 1953: 82-3). He noted that when Malay women married important men they tended to grow lazy, conceited and self-important. Their daily routine which he describes involves little more than sleeping, eating and ordering servants around. Abdullah's description of the everyday life of a

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[37] Olivia Raffles died in Java in 1814.

[38] 'A fine woman, good at making friends, well mannered, pleasant looking, and generous to the poor' (cf. Hill, 1970: 113) (*seorang perempuan yang baik, lagi pandai membawa hati orang. Dan lagi berbudi dan muka manis dan hatinya murah kepada segala orang miskin;* Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 133).

[39] American wife of the British missionary Benjamin Keasberry.

[40] The American Mrs Tracy is something of an exception, for there is an account of her explanation of the difference between America and Britain.

well-to-do Malay woman is hardly commendable, and stands in obvious contrast with the preceding portrayal of Raffles' wife, who he remarks, was as active as a tailless cockroach (*lipas kudung*[41]). Abdullah is perhaps mistaken to take Raffles' wife as typical of all Western or British women. There was doubtless any number of aristocratic or upper-class British women[42] in the early nineteenth century whose activity was similar to that of the Malay women described. Nonetheless, Abdullah's observations are important for two reasons in particular. Firstly, he recognises differences in the behaviour of Malay and British women of what he sees as similar status. However he is quick to conclude that all British women behave in the same way. Secondly, he seems to admire Olivia Raffles for her work ethic, and not just that, but a work ethic which he has already described as being similar to that of her husband. Indeed he suggests that the relationship of Raffles and his wife was like that of a ruler and his minister[43]. This attack on Malay wives of high rank, should perhaps be seen as part of the ongoing criticism of the Malay ruling classes that runs through Abdullah's works[44]. Just as rulers failed in their duty to their subjects, becoming slaves to power and corrupted by their wealth, so too did their wives. However we should also recognise that these images of marital partnership, with their recognition of the supportive role played by a ruler's wife, certainly have a precedent in traditional Malay literature, as already discussed with reference to *Hikayat Maharaja Ali.* The number of proverbs and aphorisms drawn on to illustrate the nature of the partnership also suggests that this British example had something in common with Malay ideal models.

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41 An analogy for a quick worker.

42 Laziness among British male aristocrats was not unknown either!

43 Abdullah noted similar qualities in the relationship of Butterworth and his wife. Regarding the couple he wrote: 'I admired the character of his wife, her charm, her modesty, her courtesy to everyone. My heart warmed to them as I thought how fortunate were the people of Singapore in having a good governor who understood how to win the confidence of his people. I understood the reason inasmuch as I saw how well-suited they were to each other by character and temperament, he and his wife who have been joined together by Allah, as milk mixes with sugar...' (cf. Hill, 1970: 299)(*maka tambahan pula kuperhatikan tabiat isterinya dan kelakuannya serta dengan lemah lembut budi bahasanya serta pandainya memberi hormat akan orang. Maka terkembanglah hatiku seraya berpikir dalam hatiku, bahwa besarlah untungnya orang Singapura ini mendapat raja yang baik dan pandai mengambil hati segala rayatnya, karena kuketahui perkara itu oleh sebab melihat tabiat dan kelakuannya dua laki isteri telah berpatutanlah yang telah dijodokan Allah seperti susu dengan syakar* ... (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 403-404).

44 While Abdullah tells us little about his own wife, he comments that after she died, 'his house was in chaos like a country without a ruler' (*rumah tanggaku porak parik seperti negeri yang tiada beraja* Datoek Besar dan Roolvink, 1953: 394), thus alluding to a household role of considerable importance.

Individual portraits

Having considered the large number of British individuals portrayed by Malay authors, and having given a broad overview of the main interests and concerns of those authors with respect to their descriptions of the British, the remaining part of this chapter will consider the portraits of four particular individuals, Raffles, Minto, Queen Victoria and Keasberry. These figures have been chosen not only because of their appearance in a variety of texts, but also because they represent different types or categories: Queen Victoria, a paramount ruler, Keasberry a teacher, Raffles an administrator or official, and Minto with his somewhat ambiguous position between ruler and official.

Raffles

Of all the British men portrayed in Malay literary texts, the individual who seems to be most dominant is Stamford Raffles. He was of course active not just in the founding of Singapore, for which he is perhaps best known, but in the period of British rule over Java (1811-1816), which saw British military activity in Sumatra too. Accounts touching on various aspects of his activity in the Malay world are found in texts coming from Java, Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula. The number of different authors, and the range of genres they used, is evidence of a wide scope of authorial approaches to portraying not just Raffles, but also the British more generally. Raffles is described in varying degrees of detail in *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala*, *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*, *Hikayat Abdullah*, *Hikayat Siak*, *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau*, *Tuhfat al-nafis*, *Hikayat Johor serta Pahang*, two variant recensions of *Hikayat Palembang*[45] and *Syair perang Menteng*.

The most thorough portrayal of Raffles[46] is found in *Hikayat Abdullah*. Not only is his physical description detailed at some length, but also we are told of some of his habits, daily activities, attitudes and behaviour. Abdullah's first mention of Raffles relates to Raffles' second period in Melaka[47]. Having described how Raffles took a house in Bandar Hilir, and the various European objects he brought with him, Abdullah narrates how he was invited to work as a copyist for the British official, before turning to Raffles' physical features:

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[45] These are texts B and D (RUL MSS. Or. 2276c; 2276d) in Woelder's study (1975).
[46] Invariably referred to throughout the text as *Tuan Raffles*.
[47] In December 1810. His short visits to Melaka in 1808 are not mentioned by Abdullah (Hill, 1970: 74).

Sebermula, maka adalah sifat Tuan Raffles itu aku lihat tubuhnya sederhana. Tiada tinggi, tiada rendah, tiada gemuk, tiada kurus. Dahinya luas, alamat besar hematnya. Dan kepalanya buntar bincut kehadapan, alamat berakal. Dan rambutnya warna perang, alamat berani. Dan telinganya lebar, alamat banyak penengaran. Bulu-keningnya lebat dan matanya sebelah kiri ada juling2 air dan hidungnya mancung dan pipinya cengkung sedikit dan bibirnya nipis, alamat pandai berkata2. Dan lidahnya manis dan mulutnya luas dan lehernya jinjang dan warna tubuh putih bahana dan dadanya bidang, pinggangnya ramping dan kakinya sederhana. Maka apabila ia berjalan, akan2 bungkuk sedikit. (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 74)

As for Mr Raffles' characteristics, I observed that his physical shape was average. He was neither tall nor short, neither fat nor thin. His forehead was broad, indicating care and thoroughness; his head was round with bumps at the brow, indicating intelligence. His hair was brown, a sign of bravery; his ears were wide, suggesting a good listener. His eyebrows were thick and his left eye squinted slightly; his nose was sharp and his cheeks slightly hollow. His lips were thin, indicating skill in speech. His tongue was gentle and his mouth wide; his neck tapering; his complexion not very clear; his chest was broad; his waist slender and his feet of average size. He walked with a slight stoop. (cf. Hill, 1970: 75)

This description is clearly reminiscent of traditional Malay conventions on two levels. Firstly, his physical description is detailed feature by feature. Secondly, many of these individual features approximate traditional ideals of beauty, as discussed in the first part of this chapter. Qualities such as a *tubuhnya sederhana*, *hidung mancung*, *dada bidang* and *pinggang ramping* are all common formulae in the traditional literature with which we know Abdullah was well acquainted. The physical description of Raffles is also notable for the interpretations which Abdullah interlaces among his observations. These interpretations are extremely positive, and again it is evident that Abdullah is also drawing on traditional conventions[48] in his assessment of Raffles' nature.

Abdullah then goes on to list a number of Raffles' personal qualities, and he constantly reminds his audience that his knowledge of these qualities is based on his personal observations. He notes that Raffles was thoughtful (*senantiasa di dalam berpikir*), respectful (*pandai ia memberi hormat*), tactful in ending conversations (*pandai ia membunuh perkataan orang*), and generous to the poor (*terbuka kepada orang miskin*). Indeed his qualities are summarised by the author as follows:

Maka adalah yang kulihat barang suatu perkerjaannya atau perkataannya dan kepandaiannya dan bangun2 orangnya dan budi bahasanya, jikalau tiada salah pahamku bahwa dapat tiada ia ini orang2 besar atau pandai dan lagi dengan besar hematnya. (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 79)

But what I particularly noticed was that everything about him, his work, his words, intelligence, deportment, his character and breeding, if I am not wrong, unmistakably denoted that this was a man of ability and great discretion. (cf. Hill, 1970: 78)

[48] The structure of Abdullah's description bears many similarities with Chapter 19 of *Tajus salatin*, 'on physiognomical signs' (see Roorda van Eysinga, 1827: 189-193).

These observations of his physical appearance and personal qualities, despite their being clearly presented as based on personal observation, are evidently rooted in traditional Malay convention.

While the above observations on Raffles are detailed, they are not particularly enlightening, given their closeness to traditional Malay conventions. However, there are certain incidents, which show that Abdullah really gave serious consideration to Raffles' nature, demonstrating how he was different from Malays and what really marked him as an individual. It is in such descriptions that we see Abdullah breaking free from convention, and entering into a dialogue with the subject of his writing. The durian incident is a case in point. Abdullah reports that one day a Malay brought six durians to Raffles' residence. The British official's reaction might seem somewhat exaggerated, for Abdullah describes that he pinched his nose and ran upstairs as soon as he first caught a whiff of the pungent fruit. Consequently Raffles, stricken by a headache, banned the fruit from the house, and Abdullah learnt that there were some people who did not like the smell of durian and did not know how to eat it (*tiada tahu makan durian*). As a result of this event, Abdullah and the other Malays present were given cause to observe the differences in man:

> **Maka tersenyumlah aku sekalian menengar perkataanny itu karena berlainan tabiatnya itu dari pada orang lain. Barang yang disukai oleh orang, dibencikannya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 80)
>
> We all smiled on hearing those words (banning durian from the house), his attitude being so different from that of others. While they liked something, he hated it. (cf. Hill, 1970: 79)

Elsewhere in the chapter introducing Raffles, Abdullah tells of Raffles' habit of lying on his back on a table with his eyes closed in order to collect his thoughts when writing. Raffles apparently asked numerous questions about 'strange things' (*bertanyakan perkara2 ajaib*). It is noted that Raffles was concerned to know how the British were regarded in comparison with the Dutch. Also his efforts to build collections of flora and fauna, as well as manuscripts, are recounted in some detail. In particular, Abdullah questions the long-term impact of the acquisition of manuscripts. Abdullah's criticism in this section on Raffles' collecting, is multi-layered. Abdullah seems to challenge Raffles' habit of collecting manuscripts as these were rare and thus would disappear from Malay culture. Contrastingly, he is not critical of the collection of flora and fauna in itself, though what Abdullah does object to is the commoditisation of these collectable items. As Abdullah states, Raffles was concerned little for money (*tiada memandang uang*) when it came to his collections and thus a small industry was created where

money could be earned for all manner of objects which would have previously been seen as without monetary value.

Another revealing section is that which concerns the dealings of Raffles and Tengku Panglima Besar[49]. This section has been commented on by various scholars with regard to the historical events portrayed. However, the description of Raffles' emotions and reactions in this section is particularly noteworthy. Abdullah describes at some length Raffles' response on hearing the contents of a letter from the Javanese, with his gradual realisation that he had been duped. At first he became lost in thought, and then for the rest of the afternoon seemed unable to make up his mind. His preoccupation was such that his regular habits were disrupted. He failed to go for his evening drive and the following morning still sat in his chair holding the letter. The moment of realisation of the truth is recorded as the moment when Raffles turned pale. He paced up and down before giving a sideways glance at the *pangeran* when he was summoned. He turned to the *pangeran* as if he meant to hit him and as he questioned the Javanese prince, the British official's anger was visible, by his trembling limbs, and the colour of his face turning almost to purple. Having heard the whole story, he bit his little finger and slapped his own leg, his face still purple with anger. Raffles had been deceived by the prince, and Abdullah surmises that his anger was caused by both the deception and the embarrassment this caused him in front of Lord Minto. The description of Raffles' behaviour is partly reminiscent of the stock motifs associated with the anger of officials in traditional Malay literature. However the scene comprises such a variety of features, many of which seem to be particularly well observed by Abdullah, that the scene might be described as realistic; the reader is able to fully imagine the situation on the basis of the text alone.

The title of the poem *Syair Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau* suggests a central focus on the British official in this text. However this poem, concerned with a description of Raffles' second expedition into the Minangkabau hinterland, while giving much information regarding the places visited, the arduous nature of the journey, and the reactions of various local rulers, actually tells us little about Raffles himself. Raffles (*Tuan Besar),* along with his wife (*madamnya),* are described briefly in the opening stanzas. We are told that Raffles was intelligent and generous (*akalnya baik tangannya murah*). Later when the couple arrives at the meeting hall in Padang, Raffles, a great expert (*sangat jauhari*), and his wife were unperturbed by the crowd[50]. When being

[49] Chapter Eight of *Hikayat Abdullah.*

[50] From this observation, we arguably learn more about the attitude of the author of the poem than of Raffles and his wife. The question has to be asked as to why they should be concerned by the crowd in Padang? There is no reason given for this other than the size of the crowd, but this is something that

discouraged from travelling inland by the sultan in Padang, for fear that the British representatives would be killed by the Pasemah ruler, Raffles' reply is recorded as follows, 'I am not afraid of this man, the one who is more powerful is Allah, the Almighty, and he knows who is weak and who is strong' (*Tidaklah hamba takut akan manusia ini / yang lebih kuasa Allah subhani / kuat dan lemah dianya ketahui*).

It is related that the expedition encountered problems in its dealings with local chiefs on several occasions. In recording the lengthy negotiations to pass through the Tiga Belas area, the author convincingly portrays Raffles' irritation with the discussions[51]. Raffles proposed paying money rather than making the customary offering. Raden Tua's reaction, that he would remain silent over the business, for the times now were too different ('*tidak hamba mahu bicara bermain / zaman sekarang terlalu lain*'), is again a reminder of the different ideas and codes of behaviour that were heralded by the encounter with the British. Despite the author's numerous compliments concerning Raffles' behaviour, manner and conduct, it is clear from these two lines that Raffles' behaviour was perceived as being far from the accepted model of decorum and conduct. The behaviour of Raffles in Gantung Ciri is described as good, his speech true and earnest (*Tuan Besar itu baik lakunya / bicaranya betul dengan sungguhnya*). In his meeting with a local chief, Raffles is characterised as wise (*budiman*) and resourceful (*cerdik*). In negotiations with the chiefs of Solok, Raffles is portrayed as being learned and wise (*arif lagi budiman)*, and behaving in the appropriate way (*kerjanya betul sangatnya benar*). While on the trip to Pagar Ruyung, in a manner reminiscent of Abdullah, it is recorded that Raffles asked the names of all that he saw, and noted it all down on paper. Finally, on arriving back in Padang, a celebration is held, in which the white men danced with upright stature, including Raffles and his wife.

Any other mentions of Raffles in *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau* simply refer to his actions or the orders that he gave, and certainly do nothing to add to our understanding of the man. Raimy Ché-Ross (2003: 70) has commented that the characters in this *syair* are 'vividly presented', lacking the 'vociferous adulation' that is more typical of the genre. However, while agreeing that the portrayal of Raffles is not as eulogistic as in many other *syair*, and notwithstanding the factual and crisp nature of the narrative, it is difficult to argue that Raffles is 'vividly presented'. Indeed this is not perhaps so surprising, for as the author notes, he was not actually part of the expedition, and therefore the large part of the *syair* is based on the accounts of third parties. While

one imagines Raffles and his wife would be well accustomed to, perhaps more so than the author of the poem.

[51] See stanzas 65-75 in Raimy Ché-Ross, 2003.

the poem is notable for its fast moving narrative, with its journalistic style of reporting events, a feature which, incidentally, is in no way unique for the period, the characters' portraits are for the most part far from revealing or 'vivid'. Of Raffles himself, the only activity that set him apart was his collecting. All the other descriptions and attributes, though as Raimy points out quite muted, were typical of any number of Malay rulers and officials and very much in accordance with Malay conventions as outlined in the first part of this chapter.

Another text which has been noted for its journalistic style of reporting events is *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* (Murtagh, 2002). Raffles features quite prominently in this text, as the British official who was appointed governor after the British attack on Batavia of 1811[52]. The anonymous author of this poem eulogises Raffles in the best tradition of Malay literature. Raffles is decorated with such attributes as great wisdom (*banyak budinya*) and correct and graceful speech (*bicaranya lemah lembut dengan betulnya)*. He apparently delighted the hearts of the population (*menyukakan hati sekalian orang),* he kept the country safe (*memeliharakan negeri terlalu aman*), and the faithful Raffles is even ascribed with possessing the divine power of a ruler (*Itupun daulat raja bangsawan / Tuan Raflis yang setiawan*). While the poem as a whole bears many traits which are suggestive of more modern realistic writing, in terms of characterisation of the individuals mentioned in the text, and Raffles is the individual who receives most attention, the language used does little to reveal the author's understanding of Raffles, other than as an idealised Malay official, indeed at times with the air of an actual ruler.

Raffles appears in *Tuhfat al-nafis* in a short section that relates the British establishment of a settlement in Singapore[53]. The relations between Raffles and Farquhar are to the fore in this section. Raffles, always referred to as *Tuan Raflis,* is clearly seen as Farquhar's senior, for it is written that while Raffles was travelling to Bengal, Mr Farquhar[54] was left as his representative (*Tuan Ferquhar ditinggalkannya wakilnya*). When Raffles returned to Singapore, Farquhar had been waiting for his

[52] Referred to as *Jenderal Raflis, Tuan Raflis, Baginda Raflis*. While the text describes him as being made governor, it also describes him as being a *raja*.

[53] See Matheson Hooker, 1998: 340-344.

[54] While Raffles is consistently referred to as Tuan Raflis in *Tuhfat al-nafis*, the naming of Farquhar varies considerably. It is also the case that different manuscripts edited by Matheson Hooker refer to Farquhar with variant forenames and titles. Farquhar, to whom is ascribed the title of *raja Melaka* (king of Melaka) on several occasions in the text, is also variously referred to as *Mejur Ferkuar, Mejur Wilim Ferkuar*, *Tuan Ferkuar*, and *Kernil Ferkuar*. In certain manuscripts the combination *Tuan Mejur Wilim Ferkuar* also arises and in one manuscript he is often referred to simply as *Ferkuar* without any titles or forenames. It is intriguing that Farquhar is given the title of *raja*, while Raffles is only ever *tuan*.

approval of a plan to install Tengku Long as sultan. The only indication of the emotions felt by Raffles is the mention that he was startled (*terkejut*), on hearing that an agreement had not been made in his absence. While the sense of urgency is portrayed in needing to complete the plan as soon as possible, together with the discussion of the need for secrecy from the Dutch, any other emotional detail is absent.

In the passage describing the meeting between Raffles and Tengku Long we see that Raffles was portrayed as very much aware and respectful of Malay traditions, particularly correct decorum towards rulers:

> **Maka apabila berjumpa Tuan Raflis maka dihormatilah sebagaimana adat menghormatkan raja-raja, dipasangkan meriam dan dipikulkan tambur dan lainnya. Kemudian maka baharulah dibawanya masuk ke dalam kapal itu. Maka diberilah kerusi, maka beraturlah duduk Tengku Long dan Tuan Raflis serta Mejur Wilim Ferkuar itu. Maka berkhabarlah Tuan Raflis itu kepada Tengku Long itu dengan perkataan yang lemah lembut serta nasihat dan pujuk-pujuk yang halus-halus.** (Matheson Hooker, 1998: 342-3)
>
> When he [Tengku Long] met with Mr Raffles he was honoured in accordance with the traditions for honouring rulers, cannons were fired, drums were beaten and so on. Then he was taken inside the boat. He was given a chair and Tengku Long sat together with Mr Raffles and Major William Farquhar. Then Mr Raffles informed Tengku Long [about the plans] using polite words, giving advice and encouraging him delicately.

However, the author's language also suggests that the approach taken by Raffles was not merely out of respect, but rather an astute method for achieving the required result as expediently as possible. We are reminded here of descriptions of Raffles in *Syair peri Tuan Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau* and *Hikayat Abdullah,* which portray his resourcefulness and cunning and also his consistent treatment of people with respect appropriate to their rank. This attitude of respect is further substantiated by the account of Tengku Long's arrival in Singapore the following day, when Raffles and all the other white officials paid him their respects with every mark of honour (*memberi hormat dengan sehabis-habis hormat*)[55].

The account given in *Hikayat Johor serta Pahang* of the installation of Sultan Husain, sees Raffles first offering the position of sultan to Temenggong Abdul Rahman of Pahang. He apparently declined, as his rank was lower than that of Tengku Husain of Riau. Little detail is given of Raffles, who is always named with the title *tuan*. When he

[55] While from the piece of text quoted it might be tempting to read Raja Ali Haji's account of the settling of Singapore as implying that Tengku Long was naively flattered into a collaboration with the British, this would probably be a false reading. While there may be a hint of that, it should be noted that at the end of the section, it is written that, having established the settlement, many Malays, *orang laut*, and Chinese gathered there for work, and also that many traders came to the settlement, all the marks of a good and well-ruled Malay city.

met with Temenggung Abdul Rahman, he apparently gave many presents to the Pahang chief. The author's approach makes it very clear that Raffles was viewed as a mere official, subject to the whims of Malay rulers. It was the will of the local chiefs, rajas and sultans that mattered, and Raffles was powerless to control them. Finally, when the decision was made and Sultan Husain was appointed, then the *bendahara* of Pahang decided to ignore the new upstart settlement created by Raffles, and indeed the text makes no other mention of the British[56].

In the Palembang texts, known as *Hikayat Palembang*, Raffles enters the narratives in relation to the British military activity in and around Palembang of 1812. While Raffles himself was not part of these military movements and fighting, the action was carried out on his orders. In the RUL MS. Or. 2276c, there is minimal mention of Raffles[57], the only real insight we gain into his character being when Raffles was apparently shocked (*terkejut*) on hearing of the mistreatment of the Dutch in Palembang. In another recension of this text, the RUL MS. Or. 2276d, the author elaborates somewhat on Raffles' character. After introducing Raffles[58] as the general who ruled over the whole of Java, the author states that Raffles was kind and gentle to the common people on days of celebration (*lagi budi bahasanya manis kepada orang kecil-kecil, tiap-tiap hari pesta*). Also towards the end of the text, when Gillespie speaks directly to Raffles[59] he is described as first taking off his hat and placing it on the table (*mengempaskan cepiaunya di atas meja serta katanya kepada Jenderal Misti Raplis*). This is of course one of the characteristics noted by Van der Linden, as being associated with the behaviour of Europeans by Malay authors.

The mention of Raffles, referred to as Mista Rafula, in *Hikayat Siak* (Muhammad Yusoff Hashim, 1992: 246) is fleeting and by name only. His name is only recorded because the Dutch warned local people not to side with Raffles, at that time governor in Bengkulu, against the Dutch. Ahmad Rijaluddin's *Hikayat perintah Negeri*

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[56] According to the *hikayat* when Bendahara Ali of Pahang heard that Sultan Husain had been installed by Raffles he responded that he would not get involved but that he still gave obeisance to Daik (Riau) and that concerning Pahang affairs he would ignore Singapore and continue to refer to Daik (M.A. Fawzi Basri, 1983: 53). For further background to this incident see Linehan, 1936: 56.

[57] Raffles is referred to as *Jenderal Raflis*.

[58] Referred to as *Jenderal Misti Rabpelis*, *Jenderal Misti Raplis* and *Raja Betawi*. While referred to as a *raja*, it is clear later on in the text that Raffles is seen as being part of a hierarchy, for there is discussion of an action being done in the name of the *Maharaja Ingglan*, by the government of *Tuan Jenderal Misti Raplis*, who rules over Java (Woelders, 1975: 160). From the apparent wording of the letter sent to the Palembang sultan, we know that he was also known as both *Jenderal* and *Tuan Besar* (Woelders, 1975: 156).

[59] Interestingly the author reports Gillespie's speech using the personal pronoun *gua*, which is more normally associated with Jakarta dialect than the speech of British officials. This pronoun is common to all individuals throughout this recension.

Benggala, likewise gives but passing mention to Raffles, recording that *Raja Lord Minto* ordered *Mistar Raful* to act as his representative in the Malay states. In this text Raffles is afforded the title of Mr, showing a realistic understanding of his relationship with the centre of governance in Bengal, and his position more similar to that of official, than to that of ruler. In *Syair perang Menteng (*Woelders, 1975: 211) the author describes fatalities as being in the thousands, and the number of casualties is noted for being similar to the number of deaths in the war fought by Raffles (*Jenderal Ruplis*). Seemingly the Malay memory of Raffles, considering he did not actually take part in the Sumatran campaigns, was stronger than that of any of his subordinates.

Lord Minto

Lord Minto, who appears in a number of texts relating events that occurred in the early part of the nineteenth century, is an intriguing figure in Malay literature. His presence looms in the background of several texts, yet as an official based in Bengal, he was often far from the action with which he is linked. Malay literary portraits of the governor-general[60] tend to be quite vague, and of all the British individuals that are included in Malay narratives, it is Minto that occupies the most ambiguous position. In the descriptions of his function, there seems to be something of a synthesis of the usually separate roles of official and ruler. So too, as has already been noted with respect to Ahmad Rijaluddin's writing, there is a confusion or obscuring of the geographical origins and place of power of this high-ranking official.

Abdullah's description of the arrival of Lord Minto[61] in Melaka, records a great deal of pomp and ceremony. The author writes that thousands of local people gathered to see what he looked like and also what kind of clothes he was wearing (*bagaimanakah gerangan rupanya dan pakaiannya*). When, after much ceremony, Minto finally arrived on shore, Abdullah reports that he was disappointed by the appearance of the man, in comparison with the reports that he had heard (*indah khabar dari rupa)*:

> **Telah lalu separoh umur dan tubuhnya kurus dan kelakuannya lemah lembut dan air mukanya manis. Maka adalah rasa hatiku, tiada boleh ia mengangkat duapuluh kati, begitulah lembut orangnya.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 98-99)

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[60] In *Tuhfat al-nafis*, the governor-general in Bengal is also mentioned, (but this would have been Francis Rawdon-Hastings, 1st Marquess of Hastings), when recording the treaty read out in Singapore appointing Tungku Long as Sultan Husain Syah (Matheson Hooker, 1998: 343).

[61] Minto is mainly referred to in the chapter 'About Lord Minto' (*Dari hal Lord Minto)* (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 97-105).

> He was past middle age, his body thin, his manner mild, his face pleasant. I would not have imagined him capable of lifting twenty-kati[62], his build was so weak. (cf Hill, 1970: 91)

Certainly this is far from being the portrait of a ruler or high official that we have come to expect from Malay writers, and again Abdullah is notable for his realism. He also records that Minto's clothing, a simple black jacket and black trousers, were far from remarkable. However, Abdullah is swift to point out that Lord Minto's behaviour was exemplary, and apparently caused great delight to the local population (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 99). The remaining narrative of Minto refers only to his actions. He was generous and compassionate to criminals and debtors, he ordered the destruction of the dungeon where prisoners had been tortured, and he visited the different ethnic communities in Melaka, including their respective places of worship. Perhaps most importantly he apparently encouraged Abdullah to learn English, and commended his writing skills. It was also on this occasion that Abdullah shook Minto's hand, to be able to comment that he 'felt the skin of his hand as smooth to the touch as that of a child' (*Adalah kurasai halusnya kulit tangannya itu seperti tangan kanak2 lembutnya*).

In Abdullah's *hikayat,* Minto is always referred to as *Lord Minto,* and on one occasion, when quoting the speech of the gaoler, as *Tuan Besar Lord Minto* (His Excellency Lord Minto). In earlier texts however Minto's title and position are less clear. In *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala,* for example, Lord Minto is also the *raja Benggala* (king of Bengal), *raja Kalkata (*king of Calcutta) and *Baginda Raja Lord Minto* (His Majesty the King Lord Minto). While in the opening of the *hikayat* it is stated that Lord Minto was appointed by the king of Europe, it is Lord Minto who is then described as being very just and generous and as having subjugated many lands. It is almost as if he were a ruler in his own right:

> **Maka zaman ini dengan titah duli yang Dipertuan Yuropa maka ditaruhnya seorang raja daripada bangsa Inglan maka namanya baginda Raja Lord Minto maka terlalulah adil serta dengan murahnya raja menurut hukum dan adat negeri.** (Skinner, 1982: 26)
>
> At this present time the king of Europe has appointed a British man as ruler, his name is His Majesty Raja Lord Minto, and he is very just and generous in applying the laws and traditions of the country.

So too, when Ahmad writes of *Raja Inglan* it seems that he occasionally means this to be Minto, though at other times it is not clear whether it is actually the British monarch

[62] Approximately 25lb.

in Britain being referred to[63]. Only when the title *Yang di Pertuan Yuropa* is used are we certain that Minto is not the intended subject.

In addition to accounts of his just[64] and generous rule, Ahmad tells the reader that local princes sent yearly tribute to Lord Minto. His house (*rumah*) is described in terms of great beauty. Interestingly his palace, 'as high as a mountain', is described as being constructed in seven tiers, each out of different stones and bricks. Various elaborate latticed fences surround this palace. All doors and windows have glass of various colours, creating a shining and dazzling effect. It is inside the grounds of the palace that Lord Minto used to entertain himself picking flowers and fruit and catching the occasional fish. This description of the palace, with seven tiers, built of all manner of stones, has obvious similarities with the various palaces and towers in *Hikayat Indraputra.*

In the remaining part of the narrative Lord Minto is portrayed only as the ruler of Bengal, giving orders, particularly related to the attack on Java. The language of these orders is that which befits a ruler, for example the word *titah* is used. Various war chiefs and commanders attended *duli baginda Raja Lord Minto, duli* being a term generally reserved for royalty.

In *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi,* Lord Minto is also drawn in a role much more fitting of a monarch than of an official. While there can be no doubt as to the high regard in which Raffles is held, the highest epithets are retained for Lord Minto, the governor-general based in Bengal, who authorised the invasion and who also ruled temporarily prior to appointing Raffles. The author clearly ranks Minto far higher by using such titles as *seri paduka raja* (his highness the king), *Lor Minto yang maharaja lela* (Lord Minto the most powerful ruler) *maharaja Inggeris* (the British emperor) and *raja Menggalah*[65] (the king of Bengal). Minto, who is presented as a hero (*pahlawan*), is also reported to hold supernatural powers traditionally associated with kingship (*yang sangat sakti, raja yang sakti*). The author uses the word *titah* for orders given by both

[63] For example, when it is stated that the *Raja Inglan* destroyed the fort of Chichuda (Skinner, 1982: 128), it may be that Ahamd Rijaluddin understood that the British monarch had indeed carried out the action. Or we might take it that in fact it was the governor-general, or one of his predecessors who carried out the destruction. Similarly when it is written (Skinner, 1982:104) that certain Frenchmen were taken prisoner by the *raja Inglan*, it is surely the local governor who is meant (*mana ada segala menteri hulubalang sekalian jadi tawanan raja Inglan*).

[64] Interestingly the punishment that Minto orders for the tavern-keeper seems to be in direct opposition to Abdullah's understanding of Minto's attitude to punishment, for Ahmad records that Lord Minto ordered him to be fettered and manacled for three years.

[65] Bengal is variously written as *Benggala, Menggala* and *Menggalah* in traditional texts.

Raffles and Minto[66], a word generally reserved only for Malay rulers. However it should be noted that on the one occasion when Minto is described as becoming angry, the word *marah* rather than the royal *murka* is used. Thus in this text, while Raffles is held in high regard, his place within the British hierarchy is understood. It is Minto who is really described in the language suitable for a traditional Malay ruler:

Jenderal Lor Minto raja terbilang	General Lord Minto, the famous ruler
Mengambil Betawi terlalu garang	Took Batavia as a result of his bravery
Perintahnya betul kepada hulubalang	He gave the right orders to his war chiefs
Namanya masyhur zaman sekarang.	His name is famous in this era.
Serta diambilnya negeri Betawi	As soon as he took Batavia
Perintahnya benar tiada terperi	His rule was proper, beyond compare
Memberi perintah seluruh negeri	He ruled the whole country
Sekalian rakyat takut dan ngeri.	All the people felt fear and awe.
Perintahnya benar dengan sempurna	His rule was right and perfect
Memeliharakan rakyat serta karunianya	He looked after the people and was bountiful to them
Menjadi kasih orang semuanya	All the people came to love him
Menengarkan titah barang katanya[67].	Ready to follow his commands whatever he said.

Thus in this closing portrait of Minto, the author emphasises his leadership, using formulae familiar from traditional Malay texts. Characteristics such as fame, generosity, proper and perfect rule, and the love of his people, all come together to aid our understanding of the author's comprehension of the nature of Minto's reign. The author's understanding of leadership was completely in accordance with traditional Malay ideal, and hence the portrait he painted met the requirements of that ideal.

The figure of Lord Minto is present in both recensions of *Hikayat Palembang,* though he is never referred to by name but rather with the title *raja Menggala* or *jenderal Menggala.* It is clear that orders regarding the actions in Palembang are understood as originating from the ruler in Bengal, and indeed the British troops that were sent to Palembang are described as being led by an officer of the king of Bengal (Woelders, 1975: 69). In another recension the same idea of officers of the king of Bengal carrying out the actions in Palembang is present. Indeed further clarification comes from the following statement:

> **Maka Jenderal Raflis itu menyuruhkan anak Raja Menggala ke Palembang...**[68] (Woelders, 1975: 96)

[66] Regarding Raffles it is written: *sekalian rakyat jadi kesenangan, memengar titah dengan firman* (the whole population became happy, on hearing his orders and decrees). Regarding Minto, the people waited to hear what were the orders of Lord Minto (*bagaimana titahnya baginda itu).*

[67] Stanzas 229-231

[68] From RUL MS. Or. 2276c.

General Raffles ordered an officer of the king of Bengal to Palembang.

We are told that when a delegation from Palembang sailed to Bengal from Batavia, it was received in the appropriate fashion (*diterimanya oleh Jenderal Menggala seperti adat utusan*) (Woelders, 1975: 97). However despite such mentions of the king of Bengal, there is no characterisation of this king whatsoever in any of the recensions of *Hikayat Palembang*.

Queen Victoria

As has already been pointed out in this thesis, the figure of Queen Victoria is often most notable for her absence. Rather, it is the governors and residents stationed in the Malay world or Bengal, that are generally portrayed as being the main figures of authority. However in the jubilee poems, written in the closing years of the nineteenth century, a much more definite idea of the British monarch is revealed. Several texts praise the characteristics of Queen Victoria at some length. While the poems commemorating her Golden and Diamond Jubilees are the most obvious examples, this British monarch is also referred to in *Syair Almarhum Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor*, *Hikayat Abdullah* and various other texts.

In the anonymous poem celebrating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (SOAS MS 46944), while the subject is unmistakably Queen Victoria, she is not actually named. Rather she is variously given the titles of *raja Inggeris*, *raja Inglan* and *seri maharaja puteri yang izzat* (her illustrious and distinguished majesty). She is also called *baginda* (her majesty), and it is also explained that due to her gender she is given the title *permaisuri* (queen)[69]. Many fine qualities are attributed to the monarch:

Raja berbangsawan lagi perkasa	Noble and valiant queen
Diperintah negeri sekalian desa	Ruling over cities and countries
Turun temurun memiliki desa	Holding her position by descent
Akal bicara sangatlah bisa.	Intelligent and accomplished in speech.
Raja setiawan manis hatinya	Loyal ruler, of pleasant disposition
Elok kelakuan segenap perinya	Kind in action, in every word
Tiada berbanding dan umpamanya	There is no one like her, she is beyond compare
Ialah raja yang berasal dan usulnya.	She is a most noble ruler.
Baginda itu raja perempuan	Her majesty is a female ruler
Permaisuri nama gelaran	Queen is the appropriate title
Bersemayam diatas takhta kerajaan	Sitting on the throne of the kingdom

[69] *Baginda itu raja perempuan, permaisuri nama gelaran.*

Selamat sejahtera di dalam Londan[70]. She is safe and peaceful in London.
(Murtagh, 2003: 34)

These characteristics are portrayed as earning great love and respect from her people. What is more Queen Victoria is seen as having *daulat* in abundance (*lagi berdaulat bertambah limpah),* the evidence for which is clear from the fact that God has given her such a long reign. Many of the same ideas are revealed in the poem *Syair Kuin 50 tahun jubili*, published by Haji Muhammad Siraj. Titles used for the queen include *Kuin Wiktoria, kuin maha rani*[71] (great queen) and *raja*[72]. Again the length of reign is attributed to God's favour, and her nobility and blood are praised (*darahnya baik tinggi pun bangsa*). However, aside from the just nature of her rule, which is dealt with at great length in this poem, very few other personal characteristics are mentioned, only her gentle character and manners (*lagipun lemah budi dan bahasa*), her generosity, as shown by her open hand and charitable heart (*tangannya terbuka hati dermawan*) and her equal treatment of rich and poor (*miskin dan kaya tiada bedanya*). In the jubilee addresses from Perak, similar ideas are expressed. The queen is given the titles of *Kuin Wiktoria, permaisuri* (queen) and *ratu (*queen). The composer of the *syair* remarks on her great fame (*masyhur*), her fine manners and character, and the just nature of her rule. Certain personal qualities are also noted:

Permaisuri Kuin bangsawan	Her majesty the noble queen
Rupa majelis sangat dermawan	Beautiful in appearance, very charitable
Halus manis sebarang kelakuan	Sweet and refined in her every action
Di dalam dunia sukar selawan.	In this world it is difficult to find a match.

Thus in all these jubilee texts, the portraits of the British monarch Queen Victoria share many common features. Her long reign is linked to the blessing of God, and in two of the poems there is also a linkage to the quality of *daulat.* Characteristics such as generosity, fine manners and character, and wisdom, are common to all the poems. One of the poems makes direct reference to her beauty, while the others allude to it through their references to the beauty of flowers. The main feature that is present in the second poem discussed, is the just nature of the queen's rule. The queen remains a distant figure, to the extent that she is not even referred to by name in one of the poems. What matters most are the celebrations in the Malay world, and what is being celebrated

70 l-n-d a n.
71 As *rani* is a Hindi word for queen, this would literally be translated as 'queen the great queen'.
72 Raja is never used directly as a title for Victoria but rather more to describe her as a ruler. For example in the lines *Kuin raja yang di Ingglan* (The queen is the ruler who is in Britain), *Selamat2 raja di Ingglan (*Long live the ruler in Britain*)* (Murtagh, 2003: 40,42).

is the peace and prosperity that exists as a result of what is seen as being the queen's exemplary application of justice.

A slightly different perspective can be observed in Na Tian Piet's *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor*, for in this poem Queen Victoria actually enters into the narrative, in that she is visited by the Johor sultan in London. Nonetheless, in this highly eulogistic *syair*, the portrayal of the queen does not add much to the portrait painted in the jubilee poems[73]. For example on Sultan Abu Bakar's first visit to London, we are told nothing of the character of the British monarch, only that she entertained the Johor sultan on numerous occasions, and that her palace was beautiful and full of fine goods and furnishings (*Istana Permaisuri sangatlah indah / penuh dengan harta dan benda*[74]), that they communicated in English due to the sultan's exceptional talent, and that, when parting, they shook hands (*berjabat salam berpegang jari*[75]). In the account of the second visit to London, Na Tian Piet writes that Queen Victoria was very happy to see the sultan whom she loved very much (*permaisuri Inggeris sangatlah cinta*) once again. The author also makes the unusual observation that Queen Victoria treated people of different colour equally:

Permeisoeri Enggris sangat berbakti	The British queen, most dutiful
Bidjaksana arif dan mengarti	Skilful, wise and understanding
Sangat lah baik dia poenja hati	Her heart is good
Tiada di bedakan itam dan poeti	Not differentiating between black and white

(Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 330)

This statement on colour would seem to suggest that other individuals, and one presumes British individuals, had been seen to be less than impartial on grounds of race, though it is very rare to find mentions of it in Malay literature. The other ideas conveyed in this stanza are far more in keeping with other authors' portrayals of the monarch.

In all, Sultan Abu Bakar made five visits to England and the accounts of each of the visits are structured in a similar way by Na Tian Piet. The main focus is on the description of the excellent and respectful reception given to the sultan by the British queen, including honours awarded, invitations to the palace, entertainments laid on and

[73] The queen is referred to in this poem variously with the titles *permaisuri, ratu, maharaja. baginda ratu.*
[74] See Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 413.
[75] See Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 421.

such like. The singular purpose of such descriptions is to demonstrate the growing fame and status overseas of the Johor sultan. Thus at the end of the description of the third visit we find the statement that there is no sultan in the East Indies like Abu Bakar, such is his fame (*tiada lah sultan ditimoer India / seperti Beginda jang amat moelia / sangat lah masohor nama nja dia*; Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 339). Thus the experiences described lack any real sense of Britain. For example the description of the third visit is almost exactly the same as that of the second, except that it is stressed that the British queen and Abu Bakar grew ever closer, and that the hospitality was seen as reciprocating that which had been offered by the sultan to two of the queen's sons when they had visited Johor.

Queen Victoria is mentioned by name five times in *Hikayat Abdullah*. Four of those mentions come in the closing pages, two of which are in connection with the treaty signed with the Chinese over Hong Kong. On one occasion we are told of her portrait watching over a ceremony to commemorate the bravery of the temenggong seri maharaja of Johor. Also Abdullah prays for the longevity of Victoria's reign in connection with the bravery of Butterworth. The fifth occasion comes when Abdullah is explaining the working of the British system of justice concerning the death penalty.

> **Maka jikalau sampai tiada lagi dapat ichtiar yang lain, maka baharulah dijatuhkannya hukum atas orang itu hukum mati adanya. Diberi Allah selamat akan Permaisuri Victoria.** (Datoek Besar and Roolvink, 1953: 369)
>
> Only if a point is reached when there no other course is left is the sentence pronounced on him a sentence of death. God save Queen Victoria. (cf. Hill, 1970: 275)

A nameless British monarch is cited on several occasions in connection with the treaty with China, as mentioned above, and also much earlier on in the text, in relation to the treaty agreed with the Dutch concerning the handover of Melaka[76]. Thus, it seems that Abdullah's understanding of the British monarch is as something more formal. He links the monarchy to the realm of treaties, official honours, and the principles of the British legal system, though not its actual application. Indeed the image of Victoria in his *hikayat* is very much like the portrait of the monarch he undoubtedly saw in the offices of various British officials. Victoria exists in the text only as a stiff background image, with the reality of British power seen very much as being in the hands of those officials living in the Malay world[77].

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[76] Though in the case of the latter this would have been George IV (1820-1830).

[77] In the same way the British queen enters into Mohamed Ibrahim Munsyi's text only when he records the wording of land certificates issued in Melaka (see Sweeney and Phillips, 1975: 34).

Keasberry

Of all the British teachers and missionaries mentioned in Malay literary texts, it is Mr Keasberry who is portrayed most frequently, cropping up in *Hikayat Abdullah*, the memoirs of Mohamed Salleh bin Perang, *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar* and *Syair Kampong Gelam terbakar*. Sultan Abu Bakar, Mohamed Salleh bin Perang, and Abdullah's son, Ibrahim were all educated at Keasberry's school at various times and Abdullah commented on the importance of the school for the status it gave to the Malay language. Keasberry only came to Abdullah's attention towards the end of the time-span covered in his *hikayat*, and therefore there are only a few mention of him in it. Abdullah notes in passing that Mr Stronach of the London Missionary Society recognised the fine character, and the enthusiasm and hard work of Keasberry and thus invited him to join the society, where he became the teacher of Malay, and taught many Malay children. In his account of the fire in Kampong Gelam, Abdullah mentions that Keasberry directed the efforts to help people[78].

Na Tian Piet devotes two sections of his poem to Keasberry. One section mainly describes his death, and the other his work as a teacher to Sultan Abu Bakar. After giving the date of the passing of Keasberry, Na Tian Piet, who always refers to him as *Toean Keasberrij,* narrates the reaction of the people to this event:

Heiran lah orang tiada seperti	People were totally astonished
Dalam gredja Toean Keasberrij mati	Mr Keasberry died in the church
Sedang sembaijang bloem brenti	While he was still in the middle of his prayers
Segala jang maliat berdoeka hati.	Everyone who saw was grieving.
Wafat aja itoe ada satoe alamat	His death was a kind of sign
Toean Keasberrij itoe seperti kramat	That Mr Keasberry was like a holy man
Memboeat kebadjikan kepada oemat	Who did good service for the people
Beratoes moerid nja jang soeda tamat.	So that hundreds of pupils graduated [from his school].

(Noriah Mohamed, 2001: 329)

This description of Keasberry is unusual, for some sort of mystical or religious aura is cloaked around the image of the dead teacher. Remembering the discussion of Sultan Abu Bakar's learning under Keasberry in the previous chapter, Na Tian Piet's portrayal of Keasberry is certainly in keeping with ideas from traditional Malay literature, and is therefore somewhat surprising in the description of a British teacher. Keasberry's missionary work is not mentioned in this poem, but certainly in the latter part of his career he was more interested in education than in proselytising. However the

[78] See stanzas 37-8, Skinner, 1973.

distinctly Arabic terms used in these stanzas, (*umat, kramat, wafat*) do seem to be something of an odd choice for a priest[79].

Na Tian Piet certainly saw Keasberry as a person of outstanding qualities. He was a scholar (*pandita*), and a good-hearted (*baik hati*) person who, as befitted a man of religion, was not interested in worldly possessions (*tida memandang harta*). He taught gratuitously (*mengajar pertjuma*) and he was of a beautiful disposition (*prangei nja indah*). After a brief description of the number of students he had taught, Na Tian Piet characterises Keasberry, not just as a teacher but also as some sort of saint (*seperti aulia*). Not only was his grave apparently prepared and paid for by the sultan, but also the deceased's body is referred to with the respectful word *zinazah* (*jinazzah*), a word traditionally used for the bodies of princes (Wilkinson, 1901: 232).

Conclusion

As is evident from the discussion in this chapter, the portrayal and characterisation of British individuals by Malay authors reveals many resemblances to conventions of traditional Malay literature. Perhaps of all the aspects of the representation of the British discussed in this thesis, it is the portrayal of the individual that is most traditional. As was also the case regarding technology in Chapter Five, there is no discernable chronology of increasing engagement with the 'other'. Therefore when considering such issues as the engagement in dialogue and the recognition of and interest in difference, it is perhaps this chapter that is most disappointing. Both in terms of categories of British individuals presented, and in the representation of their particular traits, it is generally the old literary conventions that dominate and we see that Malays tended to portray British individuals in their own image. However, while the approach of Malay authors to the portrayal of British individuals is mostly monological, there are also occasional glimpses of a dialogue.

By comparing the types of British individuals who feature in Malay literature with the traditional types discussed in the first part of this chapter, we can notice a number of obvious commonalities. In general, Malay authors were concerned with members of the court, in particular the ruler. Likewise the majority of British individuals that occur in these texts are either rulers or high-ranking officials. What is more, particularly in the case of Minto, and to a lesser degree of Raffles and Farquhar, they

[79] One cannot however discount the simple reason for choice of words being dictated by rhyme.

were often represented in a manner more fitting of rulers than of officials. Thus leaving aside the actual ranks of these individuals, to all intents and purposes Malay authors saw them as British rulers. Thus they wrote about the same people that they had always written about, those people who occupied the position of power in the society, no matter whether they achieved this position by replacing Malay rulers, by supporting and assisting them, or by forcing them into relationships of cooperation.

Other British individuals described by Malay writers were generally only mentioned because they performed a specific function vital to the plot, or because they were associated with subjects interesting to the Malays such as trade, weapons, or knowledge. Thus Keasberry attracted writers for his role as the teacher of Sultan Abu Bakar, rather than for his personal qualities. So too the ships' captains, both those named and anonymous, were seemingly more interesting for what they traded than for any features intrinsic to them as British individuals.

The formulaic nature of individual portraits is a recurrent theme throughout this chapter. Whether the person portrayed is a Malay sultan in *Sejarah Melayu*, or a British official in *Hikayat Pahang*, in both of them we see common features expressed through clichés that remained more or less stable over a number of centuries. Like Malay sultans that had gone before, British rulers were admired for their justice, generosity and intellect. Characteristics such as fame, wit, accomplishment, and skill in practical matters were often rounded off by the mention of handsome looks. When it comes to emotions, there is nothing more than the standard formulae of the enigmatic smile, anger, and astonishment or surprise. Thus we can say that there is an overriding tendency for British individuals to be painted in the image of Malay individuals. The attributes that are particularly complimented on are those that are seen as exemplary according to traditional Malay ideas.

However this observation must be tempered by the recognition that there were certain concepts which remained the sole preserve of Malay sultans. Royal language was not generally used for British officials, or even British royalty. Although the word raja was used, there was certainly no question of the title of sultan being applied to these non-Malay and non-Islamic monarchs. There is some crossover with words such as *titah* and *sembah,* however words used to describe royal behaviour such as *beradu* and *santap* were not applied to British officials and rulers. While the anonymous author of *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* uses the concepts of *daulat* and *sakti* in his descriptions of Minto and Raffles, this should be seen as an exception to the norm.

The interest in titles and clothing linked to rank and status should also be understood as a continuation of traditional conventions. The bestowing of ceremonial robes on new rulers, favoured officials and deserving subjects, often described in detail, is a recurrent motif in traditional literature. Portraits of the British demonstrate the same interest in ceremonial clothing, behaviour that signifies awareness of rank, titles and honours. There is little doubt that in Abdullah's accounts of the ceremonial clothing worn by such persons as Farquhar and Raffles, we see an engagement with difference. His descriptions of clothing are recognisably European. However his keenness on ceremonial uniform can certainly be read as a continuation of conventions. A similar phenomenon can be observed in works of some other writers too. The titles and honours awarded by Queen Victoria and the prince of Wales in *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor* and by King Edward VII in *Hikayat Pahang* were obviously new. However while the mention of these particular titles and honours can be seen as a recognition of difference and change, the emphatic interest in awards is nothing but the furtherance of traditional literary norms.

The intertwining of continuity and change is evident not only in such, probably insignificant, details but also in relatively comprehensive portrayals of the British. Abdullah's portrait of Raffles, with its physical description, personal features and human qualities, draws heavily on traditional formulae, as do the depictions of Raffles and Minto in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi*. The formulae and motifs used to portray Queen Victoria in texts written at the end of the nineteenth century make similarly generous use of traditional Malay ideas and images. Characteristic points in Na Tian Piet's portrayal of the teacher Keasberry also owe their origin to Malay and Islamic literary tradition. Abdullah's criticism of Crawfurd's manner is exemplified by his failure to tolerate indigenous styles of discourse. Nonetheless a number of observations show that Malay authors did notice difference and sometimes made an attempt at recording it. Abdullah's anecdote about Raffles' dislike of durian is a funny, though convincing, proof of this, but the focus on Raffles as a collector and a scholar also sets him apart and marks him as different. The fact that Raffles's diplomatic skills are commented on by various writers, suggests that this is more than only a convention, and is indicative of more realistic and specific observation. For all the conventional descriptions of Victoria, we are also surprised by the remark that she did not differentiate between different races, a comment that surely bears witness to a new understanding of racial inequality.

However that may be, these sporadic glimpses of dialogism are swamped by the depictions of the behaviour, habits and customs of the British which are rooted in

conventions of traditional literature. Ahmad Rijaluddin, who made more attempts than anybody else at portraying British customs, was obviously unable to escape from the strictures of his pre-existing literary experience and expectations. He noted the British penchant for hunting, but the description seems to have been curiously transformed into a Malay version of the chase. So too, British girls frolic in his *hikayat* in typically Malay literary style; Lord Minto enjoys the scent of flowers and picks fruits as he wanders around his garden in a manner as befitting a hero of a Malay fantastic adventure *hikayat* as it is of a governor-general of the EIC. In other texts the leisure activities of the British are normally absent. Despite ample opportunity, Abdullah manages only the occasional reference to a stroll or a ride. It is only in Na Tian Piet's description of a ball given by the Johor sultan that the idea of British pastimes as something different comes through. Here we see the British engaging in dancing, a scene at once mesmerising yet exclusive. The Malays and other races are excluded from the clearly foreign form of this recreation, though the exclusion seems somehow tinged with envy.

With a few exceptions, most Malay writers appear to have been uninterested in the personal characteristics of British subjects. What most concerned them was what was happening in the world around them. While orders might have come from overseas, it was the individual carrying out those orders locally that mattered. As we have seen in Chapter Three, the gaze of the Malay authors, while ever broadening and extending, preferred to fix on the local and the immediate. Thus it was Minto, Raffles, Rodger and Humphreys rather than Victoria and Edward VII who attracted the real attention. The texts in this study were generally written in genres that had existed since long before the British arrived in the region. Certain aspects of the British presence, and indeed of the British individual, had commonalities with Malay notions of right behaviour and custom. These aspects had meaning for the traditional audience and were incorporated into Malay literature. However other traits, characteristics and modes of conduct we must presume were simply of no literary interest. To record such details would have been pointless and meaningless in the context of the evolving yet still traditional literature.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has examined a large number of texts that in one way or another mention Britain or the British within their narratives. A central concern has been to assess whether Malay authors entered into a dialogue with Britain, the British and British institutions, and the preceding chapters have explored the extent to which this concept is apparent in relation to a number of key issues; the view of the world, understandings of justice, ideas of education and technology, and portraiture of the individual. As is clear from those individual chapters, increased incidences of dialogism did not occur uniformly with the progression of time. While dialogism might be more prevalent in certain genres, for example autobiography and travelogues, it also occurred occasionally in more traditional genres such as the court chronicle. Even within the same text we can see dialogism with respect to one of the key issues listed above, yet monologism with regard to another. However, before discussing this shift from monologue to dialogue in more depth, it is useful to summarise the main findings from the thesis so far.

Summary of findings

The texts studied in this thesis give evidence of a considerable change in the imagining of the world. It cannot necessarily be argued that this change was caused solely by contact with the British. There was also increased contact with other Asian and European nations during this period, most notably with Turkey and Egypt. However we can see that just as the British grew increasingly dominant in the Malay world, particularly from the nineteenth century onwards, the vision of the world is one that gradually broadens and develops to incorporate Britain. Rather than a traditional view of the world bordered by Turkey and China, increasingly the British metropole moved to the centre of Malay imaginings of the world. The broadening of the outlook

coincided with a greater familiarity with the workings of the empire. While this broadening has been shown to be a general feature across all genres, certainly it was more marked in new genres such as travelogue and biography than in the more traditional eulogies and court chronicles.

In assessing the aspects of Britain and the British that attracted the attention of Malay authors, it has been established that as in traditional Malay literature, justice remained a strong and important concern. Texts, particularly from the earlier period, tended to describe British justice with conventions and formulae similar to, if not the same as, those found in traditional Malay texts. This was also the case with various eulogistic texts from the later nineteenth century. A common thread was the idea that justice under the British was of a higher standard than had been achieved by other European powers, and also indeed than under the Malay sultans.

Other texts, particularly those of Abdullah, highlighted a number of developments concerning Malay understanding of systems of justice. Perhaps the most important change evident is the argument for a system of justice where all men are equal before the law, thus representing a significant divergence from traditional concepts of justice. The implication of this equality is that, theoretically at least, a ruler is answerable to his own people. Accompanying this new contract between ruler and ruled was the increasing attention directed towards regulations and policies that were made for the good of the people. Tuan Simi was uniquely critical of the British. It is no surprise then, that in Tuan Simi's texts, it was his assessment of the reality of justice under the British that was central to his criticism of the colonial situation.

Some new developments can be observed in the attitude towards education which in traditional Malay society may be understood as falling into two main spheres, *ilmu* and *adab*. Traditional religious education was very much linked to the idea of the transmission of already held concepts regarding the Supreme Authority. So too with regard to *adab*, there was a key emphasis on the right and proper, on maintaining the communal values of society.

In those texts that portray education linked to the British, we see a generally different perspective. Abdullah saw education as essential to bringing about change.

He envisaged a society where Malays would study their own language in the same way that the Chinese, Arabs, Europeans and Indians did. In his eyes, gaining new knowledge about the world was vital if Malays were to adapt to the changing world reality. Na Tian Piet also emphasised the value of more modern types of education when he stressed that, through learning English, Sultan Abu Bakar was able to mix with members of the British royal family and other British and European officials and diplomats. Nonetheless Abu Bakar's teacher Keasberry is still portrayed in quite traditional terms. So too when Na Tian Piet described Abu Bakar's method of learning, with the clear emphasis on memorisation, there is an apparent continuation of traditional ideas of education.

Regarding technology and innovation it was discussed in the introduction to this thesis that while innovation is certainly a feature of traditional societies it was generally intensive rather than extensive. What caused astonishment in traditional Malay literature were certain objects or devices that were seen as being not of man's making. Contrastingly, in works depicting the British we see various technologies and innovations that are portrayed in the texts as being remarkable, but at the same time it is recognised that they were produced by man. Value was placed on British and European manufactures. However there is also a curious cross over, where magic still plays a part. In the text portraying the events of the Russo-Turkish war, the magic crystals that blind the British expert are an interesting manifestation of the meeting of ideas of religion and magic with science.

Of all the topics discussed in this thesis, it is in the portrayal of the individual that traditional elements are most pronounced and persistent. The categories of British individuals presented follow the patterns of traditional Malay court literature. There is an emphasis on rulers, and officials at the top of the hierarchy. Other categories of individuals, such as merchants and teachers, do occur but are only rarely foregrounded. Generally, the British were only portrayed when they had become involved in events that could not be avoided. Thus, for example, wars and the creation of the residential system all impacted on the local population and local sultanates in ways that had to be incorporated into recorded literatures. Nonetheless it was the events themselves that were of primary interest rather than the British individuals associated with the events.

Individual portraits of the British are quite undeveloped. Firstly, there is a general lack of any description of physical appearance and personal qualities. Secondly, those descriptions that are given tend to be based on traditional conventions. This tendency to conventions and formulae means that realism is rarely evident in descriptions of an individual's qualities. Certainly when describing what British individuals did rather than what they were, we see more evidence of interest and specific observations; hence the references to golf and cricket, collecting manuscripts, waking up crazed from over exposure to the sun, and speaking without recourse to notes. These activities made an impression on Malay authors who were able to find a place for such anecdotes in their narratives. It is in these observations that we see the Malay literary imagination being sparked into recognition of difference and 'otherness'.

Monologue and dialogue

One of the tasks posed at the beginning of this thesis was to assess the extent to which Malay authors engaged in a dialogue when representing the British. This thesis has explored various aspects of the Malay representation of the British and it is evident that while as a general rule we can observe that later writers tended to be more observant of difference than earlier writers, there is no straightforward and linear transformation. The situation is characterised by complexity and contradictions. However, we can make several observations that will be discussed in more depth. Firstly, certain genres were more conducive to dialogical representation than others. Secondly, it seems that Malay writers were more interested in what the British brought with them, than they were in the British as individuals. Thirdly, it is only really in the imagination of the world that we see a development of dialogism that is, with certain caveats, sequential, chronological, and ever deepening. Regarding other topics, there are instances of dialogism, but no sense of chronological development can be determined.

Genres

A range of genres has been discussed in this thesis including eulogistic *syair*, court chronicles, biographical works, travelogues and historical *syair*. It is immediately notable that the texts that have adhered most closely to traditional norms and conventions are the court chronicles and eulogistic syair. Included in these two genres are some of the earliest and most recent of the texts considered in the thesis. The highly conventionalised style, so typical of traditional literature has not allowed, or has at least limited the ability of, the authors writing in these genres to engage in a dialogue with the British. It is the voice and values of the 'self' that dominate, and any attempt to explain and portray the 'other' is oriented by the perspective of the 'self's culture. Thus in early nineteenth century texts such as *Syair Mukomuko* and *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi,* we see an imagination of the world that has difficulty in seeing beyond Malay states. British individuals, if they are mentioned at all, are sketched with the formulae befitting of traditional Malay rulers. In *Hikayat Pahang*, a text from the 1930s, the British are depicted as operating in the Malay world, but the world beyond is avoided wherever possible. Pahang still had its own sultan and thus British officials were presented in a manner reminiscent of traditional images of officials. The arrival of the British system of justice is acknowledged, but beyond this, there is no interest in things British in this text. The officials are referred to in the most fleeting manner possible, and the few observations regarding notable qualities, immediately bring the audience back to the traditional sensibilities of the court. In the eulogistic text celebrating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (SOAS MS 46944) and *in Syair Kuin 50 Tahun Jubili* similarly conventional images are predominant. The formulae used to describe the British monarch are typical of any number of traditional Malay works. They are poems devoted to the ideal image of the monarchy, rather than to Queen Victoria herself.

By way of contrast, in other genres dialogue with the British was more of a feature. In the earliest travelogue, Ahmad Rijaluddin may well have declared his intention to tell of his experiences in Bengal. His intention may well have been to give a picture of India based on his real experiences rather than preconceived ideas. However, observations based on the 'otherness' of the British only rarely seem to

shine through in what is generally a highly clichéd text. Nonetheless there are occasional instances when rather than describe what might be expected by the author and audience, use is instead made of empirical evidence, whether it pertains to the kedgeree eaten by the British officials, the inferior looks of the British girls in comparison with those from France or the church going activities of the Europeans.

In later travelogues of Abdullah and his son Ibrahim, the engagement with difference is much more apparent. Not only do the authors willingly examine and reflect upon the 'other', but also the genre itself stimulates a much more realistic narration of events. The very nature of the requirement to describe events as they happened on a day-to-day basis, aids the authors in their attempts to record what they saw and what they thought.

The biographical texts, whether Lauddin's late eighteenth century memoir or Abdullah's text from the 1840s also lent themselves to a more realistic portrayal of events. The fact that they were writing under British patrons may well have made the old conventions seem redundant, though as we have seen, neither in Abdullah's nor in Lauddin's case was it a clear break from traditional conventions and expectations. Lauddin's tale is clearly indebted to traditional conventions regarding loyalty to the sultan, the nature of justice and the role of local chiefs. Nonetheless a real situation is depicted, where against the norms of the traditional contract between ruler and ruled, Nakhoda Muda did not wait for divine intervention and instead took actions into his own hands. He sought out sanctuary under the British of his own initiative. This in itself was probably not so unusual. What was unusual was the fact that it is described in a literary text. So too Abdullah remained strongly bound to the past in his writing. His description of the physical features of Raffles is reminiscent of *Tajus salatin* and he picked up on aspects of British justice that were conducive with Islamic ideas. However he also embraced British technology, and British concepts of justice and education. He was proud of his friendships with British officials and missionaries and he saw himself as a keen observer of men and relished noting differences.

Themes

The four chapters concerned with different aspects of the portrayal of the British have shown how Malay authors were particularly interested in certain aspects of Britain, the British and Britishness, while other aspects attracted little attention. For example, remarkably few texts mention the religious beliefs and practices of the British. So too, information regarding the daily activities of the British, including those public activities that would have been most easily observable is scant, even from such apparently keen observers as Abdullah. The chapter looking at the portrayal of the British as individuals has highlighted the fact that Malay writers were not particularly interested in the British as people. Descriptions of British rulers and officials were rarely anything but conventional. Certainly this was so in the more traditional genres, but so too in the more topical texts, the travelogues and the biographical works character sketches were thin on the ground and traditional formulae retained a strong influence on authors in their portrayals of individuals.

The fact that portrayals of the British as individuals rarely developed beyond the formulaic and conventional does not mean that Malay authors failed to engage in a dialogue with the British. For in other fields, Malay representations of the British were far more complex and nuanced. In embracing technology and British material goods, there is little hesitation in pursuing dialogue with the British, aside from the interesting text on the Russo-Turkish war, which pits religion against science, as it does Muslim against *kafir*. Aside from this, weaponry (particularly cannons), steam ships, imported textiles and musical boxes all made their impression on Malay writers For example, in *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi,* the author noted the names of particular weaponry used. These observations were not just realistic, but mark perhaps the earliest occasions for the naming of grenades and grape shot in Malay literature. Abdullah's description of the steamship is remarkable for its detail and for its attempt to understand how the new technology worked. The attention given to the printing press is not just of note for demonstrating an interest in technology *per se*, but also because Abdullah realised the changes that the new method of production could bring to society.

The British as just rulers is a topic that resounds through many of the texts. It is possible to argue that the interest in justice is simply a reflection of traditional conventions and expectations. To an extent this is correct. But in several texts, even the most formulaic, the praise of the British goes beyond convention, to the point that British rulers are praised for introducing systems of justice that were superior to those that had existed in the past, not just under other European powers, but also under Malay rule. In many texts, the mention of British justice should not be seen as evidence of a dialogue. Rather, Malay concepts were imposed onto the 'other' with British justice being described in the formulae of ideal Malay justice. In other works, particularly those by Abdullah, there was a definite realisation of difference between the two systems, and the British system was championed, at least for the inhabitants of the Straits Settlements. Abdullah was the writer who dwelt most on the different nature of justice under the British. He highlighted the different ethos that underpinned the British system. He saw justice, like education and printing, as an important vehicle for creating change in society. But so too the recognition of difference with respect to British justice comes through in numerous texts. It is perhaps the topic which is most prevalent across the whole range of genres, with texts such as *Hikayat Pahang, Syair Tuan Hampris* and *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar* making references to the new system of law being introduced in Malay states as a result of contact with the British. In Tuan Simi's texts the theme of justice, or rather lack of it in practice, also shows evidence of an analysis of empirical data in measuring whether a certain image of the British held true.

The view of the world

The clearest evidence of dialogue can be found in the broadening image of the world, in which we see the old idea of the world bordered by China to the east and Turkey to the west being replaced by a new understanding of the geographical and political space, in which Europe and Britain are given an increasingly prominent position. Not just are these changes indicative of a developing understanding of the world, due to increasing contact with the British and other Europeans, but so too they

mark an increasing tendency for that wider world to enter into the literary imagination. Malay belletristic texts were often set in foreign lands, though the setting tended to be a curious mixture of real geographical locations and fantasy. Historical texts on the other hand, aside from chapters dwelling on mythical origins, tended to be centred on the sultanate rarely looking out, though certainly visits of foreigners to the sultanates were recorded. In historical texts representing the British we can recognise a gradual tendency for the world to broaden, and an attempt to look beyond the borders of the Malay world, towards India and eventually to the metropole. In place of court chronicles, with their tendency towards a narrow inward-looking perspective, the entry into dialogue with the British 'other' lifted the gaze of Malay authors such that the place of the Malay states in the wider world became a topic of interest. As has already been argued, the first understandings of the British presence based in Bengal cannot necessarily be seen as representing a major shift, for India, as a home to powerful kingdoms and as a place from which trade emanated, had long played an important role in the Malay vision of the world. Real change occurred when the view of the world moved beyond both India and the Middle East, to Europe, extending the gaze further than it had ever before reached, to a place strongly identified with different and even modern values.

While traditional style court literature maintained a more introspective nature, limited to the borders of the Malay world, new genres, particularly the travelogues and biographical style writings responded more dynamically by portraying a wider and updated view of the world. It is surely no coincidence that these new genres came about at a time when Malay writers had to deal with and to portray this new and extended picture of the world. However, even the more traditional genres responded eventually to the increasing British presence. Finally, as we see in *Hikayat Pahang*, Britain as an alternate power, operating almost at the very centre of the court, could no longer be ignored.

A postcolonial study?

Considering Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin's definition of post-colonial literatures, as those which were, 'affected by the imperial process' (1989: 2), the study of the majority of texts in this corpus should benefit from a postcolonial approach. Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin (1989: 2) continued their definition of post-colonial literatures as asserting themselves by 'foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasising their difference from the assumptions of the imperial centre. It is this which makes them distinctly post-colonial'. These specifications however raise the question of the extent to which the texts examined in this thesis have been affected by the imperial presence.

Mimicry

It has been argued that the first reaction to the colonial presence is to mimic the colonialist. Fanon (1967: 178) pointed to native writers who show that they have assimilated the culture of the occupying power, by producing writing that corresponds 'point to point' with writers in the metropole. But we do not see this 'point-to-point' correspondence in the texts studied. Most authors featuring in this thesis had little if any knowledge of British systems of education, let alone literature. A large number of the texts were written in genres that existed prior to the arrival of the British, and it would be unreasonable to expect otherwise. It is to the works of Lauddin, Abdullah, and Ahmad Rijaluddin, apparently written on the suggestion of British individuals that Fanon's idea seems to be more applicable. However while these writers may have written on the suggestion of Britons, that does not mean that they attempted to write texts that would correspond with 'those of their opposite numbers in the mother country' (Fanon, 1967: 178), or even that they were familiar with such texts.

Various scholars have debated the idea of the postulated audience, but on the evidence of this thesis we cannot say that these writers definitely wrote with a Western audience in mind. Ahmad Rijaluddin clearly took into account the expectations of the Malay audience when he wrote *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala*. It may be that he tried to write for a Western audience but the task was

apparently beyond him. More likely is that Ahmad received some advice from his British friend as to what might be included in his text, and he then strove to write such a text. However on the evidence of his composition, the only examples he had to fall back on were works from his own literary tradition. Similarly, Lauddin wrote a text that was definitely unique, for it represented the earliest biographical text known in the Malay language. However, there is little indication to suggest that the author was attempting to show he had assimilated the culture of the occupying power. The text is based too much on the local situation, and draws too much on Malay traditions and conventions to be an example of mimicry.

It is in the case of Abdullah that Fanon's idea of mimicry becomes more applicable. Abdullah certainly saw himself as someone who understood British culture and British customs and norms. He also saw the level of his knowledge as superior to that of most of his compatriots. He embraced many aspects of British thinking, but did he embrace British culture? The short answer to this is no. Abdullah deplored the ignorance of many Malays for what he saw as their lack of understanding of the British. He also deplored their obsession with supposedly meaningless tradition. However he did not reject this tradition as a whole. Most obviously he maintained his religious beliefs, but he was also well versed in and valued the Malay literary tradition. Whether he intended it or not, and he probably did intend it, the influence of traditional Malay literature resonates throughout this work. After all, Abdullah was most determined in his ideas concerning language and education. He did not wish that Malays would go to school and learn English. Neither did he write, or even aspire to write, in English. Abdullah should perhaps be seen as writing for an audience of similar outlook to himself. Even if it did not yet actually exist that postulated audience was a local one.

Other texts were also affected by the coloniser's presence in terms of content. Texts such as *Hikayat Palembang* and *Syair Mukomuko* showed the British taking part in local disputes and antagonisms but not as a dominating power. Rather the British are described as one player on a local scene where local politics and intrigues were of far greater importance. On the one hand it may be argued that the existence of such texts, with their reluctance to acknowledge the reality of the British presence demonstrates a resistance to British colonisation. On the other hand, these texts might

be seen as texts in denial of an impending monumental shift. *Hikayat Pahang* is another example of a text written in a traditional genre which seems to mention the British only when necessary. Certainly there is no case of mimicry in this text. Neither can one argue that the *Hikayat Pahang* necessarily marks a return to traditional forms, for without doubt the *Hikayat Pahang* represents the continuation of a tradition, rather than the return or the reawakening of a tradition. However, in accommodating the reality of a British resident into the court chronicle, and at the same time maintaining the key purpose of the text, to strengthen the legitimacy of the sultan, we can see the text as clearly being affected by the British presence. Yet, in this case the response to such an affect is an attempt to accommodate the new reality through absorption and adaptation.

Literature of resistance

In those texts that draw British rulers in the image of Malay rulers, and British justice in the image of Malay justice, there is little case for a literature of resistance to British domination. Rather as has already been suggested these texts seem to show a failure to recognise the 'otherness' of the British, and the new reality of imperialism that the British brought with them. These texts may be seen as examples of literature in denial, or perhaps even unaware, of the changes that were occurring.

Other texts however may demonstrate glimmers of resistance to British imperialism. The works of Abdullah, so often seen as being anglophile and noted for mimicry may also be seen as showing resistance to the British presence, and to British cultural values. His championing of Malay values as evidenced by his drawing attention to the *Tajus salatin* as being suitable guidance for Malay sultans and his concern with the commoditisation of items collected by the British and in particular the potential impact caused by the collection of manuscripts are demonstrative of his questioning of British influence in certain matters. As already discussed, his criticism of British rulers should not be seen as an argument for the failure of the British regarding justice. Nonetheless in recognising that the British were fallible, as all men were fallible, he was certainly viewing the British officials in a way that was new in Malay literature.

Ibrahim too, in his depiction of Irving hinted at ideas that showed resistance to the colonial power, even if for the most part he seemed to be working for the British. On one occasion Ibrahim specifically records that he ate separately from Irving because the food Irving offered had not been prepared in a manner appropriate for Muslims. On another occasion he argued with Syed Zain in Klang on the unsuitability of English street names for the town. He noted that while administrative systems might be copied if appropriate, names should not be copied, as they would be discordant with the Malay language. His image of the crazed Irving affected by sunstroke, specifically creates an air of mocking. Ibrahim worked as a translator and assistant to Irving on the voyage, but despite his work he makes it plain that on the one hand he admired Irving's tactics in the way he conducted business with the Malays, but on the other hand he saw it as somewhat dishonest. Thus, the gift of the cheap musical box won over the local Malays because of their ignorance of new technology. Also, while Irving convinced locals to sign land grants as a result of his negotiation skills, Ibrahim presented that story in such a way as to let the reader know that he did not necessarily approve of the result.

Hikayat Pahang also offers the possibility for an interpretation of resistance. Despite the changes to the Pahang court in being forced to accept an adviser, and despite consequent changes in the nature of rule, the text still follows the model of the court chronicle, with the principle purpose of legitimising the sultan. It may be a brave last stand, but as a text dating from well into the twentieth century this attempt to maintain tradition is particularly notable for trying to deflect and to ignore as much as possible the impact of the encounter with colonial Britain.

The texts celebrating the various British jubilees might hardly be the texts where one would expect to find resistance to British rule. However, in comparing *Syair King George yang ke-lima* with those earlier texts that celebrated Victoria's jubilees an interesting peculiarity can be observed. Not only is *Syair King George yang ke-lima* oriented very much towards the local situation, but also the text practically ignores the British monarch. Aside from the toast to the distant monarch held in the Cricket Club, the *syair* is only interested in reporting locals having fun.

Finally, the most obvious example of resistance, indeed burning rather than glimmering, is to be seen in Tuan Simi's works. Tuan Simi was unique as a writer in this study for separating himself from the elite, whether British or Malay. He clearly identified himself as writing on behalf of a certain group of Malays. His resistance was to the British as rulers, not because they were British, but because they did not rule as they should. His resistance was also to a new system of employment, in which workers were exploited. While we should note that Al-Misri, writing under the Dutch, also criticised the hardships caused by Raffles in Java, Tuan Simi was writing about his own ruler, and it is this association of exploitation with colonialism which marks Tuan Simi as different from other authors.

The position of Malay authors in colonial society

As highlighted by the above comments regarding Tuan Simi, one of the most difficult issues in this thesis is the issue of how authors saw themselves in relation to the rest of the society in which they lived. It is easy to divide the colonial situation into colonisers and colonised, but this is too simplistic (Stoler, 1989). In the case of Malay society, the colonised constituted a variety of races, and ideas of race and ethnicity were certainly different from those held in Malaysian society today. Even among the Malays there were of course individuals more powerful than others. Some of them worked for, if not alongside the British. Other Malays will have hardly ever seen a British person, or for that matter their own sultan. Traditional written literature was in large part the literature of the court. Many of the texts studied in this thesis emanated from the court. All the texts were written by literate and educated men and women. In the colonial centres of Batavia, Penang and Singapore the British were important patrons, replacing to an extent those from the Malay royal courts. Even the writers that might be considered as coming from outside of those centres of power, for example Na Tian Piet and Hajah Wok Aisyah, were still members of a privileged elite. We can argue that in traditional society the values of the elite were usually equivalent to the values of all society, however in a society that was beginning to change due to the impact of the encounter with the modern 'other' it has to be considered to what extent this remains true. It is only in the case of Tuan Simi that we

find anything overtly critical of those in power. However in the texts of certain other writers we also see the beginnings of a breakdown in communally held values.

Even if Abdullah saw himself as a Malay, and this as already noted is a contentious issue, he was certainly not writing for all Malays. He mocked and despaired of the ignorant Malays, while he championed the views of the British. This is not because he rejected the Malays and embraced the British. Rather, as an employee of the British, and as a member of the educated class of society, he found himself in a complicated position. He was at once part of the colonising class and yet colonised. He was to an extent anglicised, but certainly not British. He valued much his relationship with the various British officials, but Raffles never even mentioned him in his writings, and apparently only told him a few days beforehand that he was due to leave. But he was not a colonial stooge; he formed his own opinions, the opinions not of a man of the masses, but of a man from a distinct stratum in Malay society. So too when Ibrahim noted the behaviour of the upcountry Malays on being presented with Irving's musical box he was not just remarking on the ethics and methods of the British, he was also separating himself from those Malays. He was realising that his different knowledge and experience, which stemmed from his contact with the British, created a barrier between him and other ethnic Malays. Ibrahim was caught in the middle, and this position highlighted his ambivalent attitude towards his British employer.

The other writer who like Abdullah recognised the fundamental nature of the changes that society was undergoing, and indeed was a contemporary of Abdullah, was Tuan Simi. Of all the writers studied in this thesis, he alone was writing for a specific section of society that does not constitute the upper class. Tuan Simi also used a traditional form, the *syair,* but he wrote two poems that were completely subversive. He not only argued against the British, but he also argued against the economic system that they brought with them. He recognised that the British brought fundamental change not because they were white, or 'other', but because they had brought a new system of employment and indeed exploitation to the Malay world. In criticising the British, he was not speaking on behalf of all Malays. He was certainly not writing on behalf of the elites who worked alongside the British, but rather on

behalf of the new class of Malays that was experiencing this new form of exploitation first hand. It is in these texts, perhaps uniquely for literature from this period, that the subaltern speaks.

A postcolonial approach has demanded that certain questions be asked, regarding the identification of authors with colonial rulers, the idea of resistance to colonialism in these early writings, and the places of the author in colonial society. Generally, the approach has highlighted the limited impact of the colonial presence on Malay writing. Authors continued to use traditional genres and to write about traditional concerns well into the twentieth century. Where possible, the British were simply avoided. Certain writers were clearly patronised by the British. Some wrote on the request of the British, others most probably also received payment from the British. This mediating position that certain authors found themselves in was not always an easy one, as the writing of Ibrahim and Abdullah demonstrates. At the same time it was perhaps the somewhat peripheral position of many of these writers, in terms of their ethnicity and origins that allowed these writers to successfully straddle the British and the indigenous world.

The beginnings of a dialogue; towards the conception of transitional literature

The stage in the evolution of Malay literature that can be categorised as 'transitional', was first identified by Skinner (1978), and the conception has since been referred to and adopted by various scholars, though often with little further exploration of what exactly is meant by the term. The notion of 'transitional literature' has also attracted a certain amount of criticism, most notably from Ras (1985) Kratz (1979, 1985) and Hadijah Rahmat (2001). The arguments and findings of this thesis are useful as a starting point for a re-examination of the conception of transitional literature. Certainly several of the texts discussed in this thesis have already been used as evidence both for and against the conception (Skinner, 1978; Hadijah Rahmat 2001). The nineteenth century was a period that saw the meeting of the traditional and the modern in the Malay world in the form of the encounter between the Malay courts and the British empire. Thus as well as assessing to what extent Malay written literature that already portrays the British, actually entered into a

dialogue with that strange and modern 'other', it also seems pertinent to examine to what extent that literary engagement with the British presence provides evidence of a shift in the nature of Malay literature itself, and whether that shift is evidence of a distinct literary epoch which was brought to life by the transition from traditional to modern society.

The conception of 'transitional Malay literature' was first discussed by Skinner in his article 'Transitional Malay literature: Ahmad Rijaluddin and Munsyi Abdullah' (1978). In this article Skinner argued that until the early nineteenth century court scribes had been producing literature which was homogenous enough to call it 'classical Malay'. He argued that for writers to break out of that established pattern of literature required some sort of 'culture shock', and suggested that the encounter with the European powers was the stimulus for the reconsideration of traditional values. He highlighted Abdullah as the figure normally associated with transitional literature for reasons of his individualistic, journalistic prose. Furthermore Abdullah expressed ideas, which were in many respects at variance with those deeply rooted in the society he had grown up in. Skinner noted that while Abdullah was very familiar with various traditional pieces of literature, his own works cannot be seen as 'classical', for in addition to the individualism and journalistic style, both *Hikayat Abdullah* and *Kisah pelayaran Abdullah* 'are characterised by an unusual emphasis on the true and the real for its own sake' (Skinner, 1978: 470).

Skinner drew on the fact that Abdullah had approved of Lauddin's *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* for reasons of its realism, its telling of real events. Skinner also emphasised possible links between Abdullah and Ahmad Rijaluddin. However despite similar stated intentions, Skinner saw Ahmad as being unable to describe Calcutta in a realistic fashion. Ahmad was unable to do so, due to the restrictions imposed on him by the conventions of the *hikayat*. This lack of success, though not a total failure by any means, led Skinner to declare in the introduction to his edition of Ahmad's work that his *hikayat* should be seen as a work of the early transitional period (Skinner: 1982, 7). While it is the content, the realistic approach, or the desire to describe real events, which Skinner saw as the main feature of this break from the conventions of traditional literature, he also pointed to the rise of new genres, as evidence of this

response to the culture shock that the encounter with the West engendered. He saw diaries, memoirs, biographies, autobiographies and narratives of journeys as new genres of writing, which allowed writers to break, with varying degree of success, from the traditional genres.

Skinner argued that in the 'classical' period, most 'professional' writers were clerks in royal courts, though there were also 'amateur' writers, members of the royal elite among whom he cites as examples the bendahara of Melaka often associated with *Sejarah Melayu* and Raja Ali Haji. The close tie between writer and patron was a key factor that contributed to the homogeneity of classical literature. Thus the encounter with the British not only provoked a culture shock in terms of the witnessing of another culture, but it also caused a shock to literary culture, as, with the new metropolitan centres, there appeared new foreign, in our case British, patrons. Furthermore, the coming of the printing press, again a change closely linked with the presence of the British in the Malay Peninsula, led to new types of literary production, where the publisher replaced the royal patron. This rise of printing technology has been highlighted by Rachel Harrison (2000: 21-3) in her survey of the interaction between the traditional and the modern in literatures of Southeast Asia. She points to the fact that across the region the printing press led to an increase in the size of the reading public, and a democratisation of the subject matter of printed literary works. Kratz (1994: 304) has argued that printing technology in Indonesia was directly associated with the introduction of a 'popular' literature, which while contemporary in content was traditional in form. He also rightly drew attention to the large number of lithographs printed in Singapore in the nineteenth century, with new topical or journalistic content. These lithographs, which he saw as neglected by scholars[1], are an essential corpus of texts that would allow us to better understand the changes, developments and innovations in Malay literature of the nineteenth century (Kratz, 1979: 8).

However that may have been, the study of the nature of the 'transitional period' did not exceed the bounds of these brief discussions of journalism, and realism. For example, Raimy Ché-Ross (2003: 27), in his analysis of *Syair peri Tuan*

[1] And remain neglected twenty-five years on.

Raffles pergi ke Minangkabau, drew on those same ideas of Skinner, arguing that from the perspective of 'Malay transitional literature' the 'unusually crisp journalistic presentation and cosmopolitan idiom' allow the scholar to focus on social and regional influences on the authors who produced such texts. Claudine Salmon has drawn on Skinner to state that as one of the first travel diaries in the Malay language, *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* is probably symptomatic of the transition from classical to modern literature (Salmon, 1999: 387).

Building on Tan Ching Kwang (1986), who has written on the importance of writers of Indian and Arab descent in Malay literary history (particularly of the nineteenth century), Salmon argued that the Malays of Indian descent and the Malays of Arab descent of the Malay Peninsula and the Straits Settlements 'played a significant part in the development of a transitional Malay literature' (Salmon, 1999: 386). In contrast Ras (1985) suggested that writers of Tamil or Arab descent such as Ahmad Rijaluddin and Abdullah, should not be seen as transitional, but rather as peripheral writers, due to the fact that they had an only negligible Malay audience. These arguments rather feed on the debate that has already been touched on in this thesis on the 'Malayness' of Abdullah. The question as to why so many writers came from the periphery of Malay–speaking society is an important one, especially if we take into consideration that it is these writers who innovated, engaged with and questioned those ideas which were characteristic for the centre.

Kratz's criticisms of the idea of transitional literature were based on his assertion that transition implies a lack of durability (1979: 3) or ephemerality (1985). Kratz writes:

> I am still hesitant to accept the concept of a 'transitional' literature ... and the implication that one is dealing with a specific phase in the evolution and development from traditional to modern literature. There are sufficient examples to show that the 'classical' tradition was not only still productive but even allowed for creative change. Might it not be possible that in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century we are faced with a larger number of genres which developed and expressed themselves in different ways, possessing various roots and having different stimuli? Some of those genres would have come to an end soon while others continued in their own fashion right into modern times without necessarily leading to 'modern' literature but rather existing beside it. (Kratz, 1985: 185)

It seems that Kratz's contention was not that there was not something new happening in the nineteenth century, that marked literary expression as different from that which had preceded it. His contention was that this literature cannot necessarily be seen as leading to what can be understood as 'modern' literature. Hadijah Rahmat (2001) drew on Kratz's argument, when she wrote that to argue for a transitional period is to deny the complexity of changes that occurred during the nineteenth century. She also considered that the term implied that 'elements found in the period stated [the transitional period; B.M.] differ from the period prior to and proceeding [from] it'(Hadijah Rahmat, 2001: 365). She stated that this was not the case and that her analysis of a variety of traditional Malay texts 'shows that there is no complete transformation, rupture or break in literary development' (Hadijah Rahmat, 2001: 365).

Hadijah's analysis is additionally complicated by her frequent use of the terms 'new' and 'modern' interchangeably[2]. Her study, which rightly highlights innovations introduced by Malay writers beginning with Hamzah Fansuri, seems to view these innovations, the new, as a sign of modernity. Following this argument the first Malay to record a piece of literature on paper should be seen as an innovator, i.e. a modern writer. It is difficult to agree with such an approach for the fact that he certainly did something new by no means implies that what he did was modern. As discussed in the introduction to this thesis, the notion 'modern', in its binary opposition to 'traditional', when applied to literature should not be separated from the type and the world-view of the society in which this literature was produced. Modern literature is a product and reflection of the modernity, which is understood here as a sum total of features characteristic of a particular literary epoch. Likewise traditional literature is a product and reflections of traditionalism, a catchword for the sum total of opposite features that also characterize a particular, although different, literary epoch.

Thus transitional literature should be seen as literature which reflects and is a product of a society that is in the process of change from traditional to modern. It should not be accepted that the term 'transition' implies something of ephemeral

[2] For example she states of the authors of her study, 'They are indeed "modern" for their time and society, though what they have written may not be necessarily new in other literatures and cultures' (Hadijah Rahmat, 2001: 359).

value as suggested by Kratz and Hadijah Rahmat. This is certainly not implied in the term as it has been used by Skinner and other critics, who have viewed it in a positive sense. However, as was rightly stated by Hadijah Rahmat and Kratz, the processes of change that are evident in the nineteenth century, and, I would argue, at least into the early part of the twentieth century if not beyond, were highly complex. It is the aim of the remaining part of this discussion to consider the idea of a transition, or perhaps more rightly transitions, as evidenced in the texts that have formed the basis for this study.

In the introduction to this thesis, the conceptions of the traditional and the modern were defined. By looking at the internal and external aspects of the two conceptions, various basic oppositions were highlighted. Regarding external aspects, the opposition of written literature of manuscripts to literature of the printed book was discussed. Regarding the internal aspect, three oppositions closely related with the contrast of communal values to individualistic values were mentioned: monism (monocentricity) to pluralism (polycentrism), canonicity to relativism and traditionalism (in the narrow sense of the word) to innovation. In considering the notion of 'transitional literature', and the extent to which the texts studied in this thesis may be used to cast further light on our understanding of the transition, this model will form a useful frame of reference.

Looking first at the external aspect of literature, we can make several observations regarding the studied texts, which indicate the presence of both traditional and more modern features. While some of the texts were written in manuscript form, others were printed, using either typography or lithography. To an extent we might see this shift to printing as indicative of an engagement with the West and with the British. The emergence of printing, which generally occurs alongside a shift of the centres of literary production from the traditional courts to the cities, is also accompanied by the rise of authorial approaches which are more dialogical in nature. Thus, it is no surprise to find that texts such as the autobiographical *Hikayat Abdullah*, and the travelogue *Kisah pelayaran Ibrahim* were printed. So too we can see that the more topical texts celebrating Queen Victoria's jubilees and King George

V's coronation and jubilee, with their more journalistic style, were published by the growing number of urban based publishing houses.

Be that as it may, many texts analysed in this thesis were written in the traditional manuscript form. While the early nineteenth-century text *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* can be recognised as one of the earliest travelogues written in the Malay world, thus an example of a new genre, there was no option for its author but to record his text in manuscript form, given that he was writing before the advent of printing in the Malay world. By way of contrast, *Hikayat Pahang*, written in the 1930's could have been recorded in printed form, for the technology was certainly available. However as a court chronicle, it may well be that the manuscript was considered to be the only appropriate type of production. It should also be remembered that while printing was dominant in the main urban centres by the early twentieth century, it was far less common in the states on the east coast of the peninsula. Nonetheless, the example of *Hikayat Pahang* should be compared to *Syair Tuan Hampris*, a eulogistic poem that was published by its author in 1928 in the east coast state of Trengganu. We might also contrast the two poems written about the reign of Sultan Abu Bakar. While Na Tian Piet's poem, *Syair almarhum Baginda Sultan Abu Bakar di Negeri Johor,* was published in the form of a printed book written in Rumi letters, *Syair Sultan Abu Bakar*, 'written by a native of Lingga but resident in Pahang', which is much more concerned with dynastic affairs, was written three years later but in the form of a manuscript.

Before addressing the internal aspects of texts discussed in this thesis, it will be useful to consider the emergence of new genres, for it is in them that the transition from internal traditional features to internal modern features is particularly conspicuous. The emergence of the travelogue, the biography and the topical text, are certainly important indicators of change. It is also generally seen that these new genres are the beginning of something modern. The new genres, with their emphasis on personal experience, and written from the perspective of the individual, can be seen as marking a departure from the communally oriented texts associated with traditional literature. Certainly three works discussed in this thesis, *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda*, *Hikayat perintah Negeri Benggala* and *Hikayat Abdullah* are known to have

been written on the prompting of British individuals. Thus we can see that in the most obvious sense, the encounter with the West was a spark for the writing of literary texts in new genres. However, these texts all contain, to a greater or lesser degree, significant traditional elements.

We can also see that certain traditional genres continued to be used well into the twentieth century. Texts such as *Hikayat Pahang* and *Syair Tuan Hampris* may have been among the last examples of genres that had existed for centuries, but there are certain features that demonstrate that they had begun to respond to the withering of a traditional world-view. *Hikayat Pahang,* a twentieth-century court chronicle, in taking note of, and responding to, the 'other', was recognising that a tradition was passing. The changes evident in *Hikayat Pahang* represent an attempt to accommodate new and more modern elements within a traditional genre intended to express traditional values. Thus the descriptions of such events as the introduction of a system of law from Singapore, the mention of honours awarded to British officials and to the Malay sultan, and the co-operation of the Pahang prince regent with the British resident are not just indicative of the narration of the unavoidable. Rather those examples represent the beginnings of a shift from monism to pluralism, even if only rudimentary, and from tradition to innovation. Thus Kratz is correct, that even in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, 'classic' genres still allowed for 'creative change'. However, the lack of further recensions and copies of *Hikayat Pahang* is evidence of the ultimate withering of those traditional aspects in the face of ever strengthening modernity.

The changes that occurred in literature during the nineteenth and the early twentieth century were highly complex, diverse and far from chronological. We can see that some genres seem to have reached their end in this period. For example court chronicles were gradually replaced by modern histories. Other genres that emerged in the period shared many features with genres that would be familiar to the Malay audience today. However in the same way that a traditional genre responded to the shock of the modern before finally becoming redundant and irrelevant, so too, at least initially, the new genres bore many clearly traditional characteristics and features. Thus, in their earliest manifestations, these new genres were not yet modern. The

transitional epoch was marked by a coexistence of old genres and new genres, traditional elements and modern elements. The discussion of modes of publication and genres has shown that there was not a direct correlation between the appearance of new genres and publishing. There are instances of traditional genres being published and, conversely, more modern genres being recorded as manuscripts. It is precisely the multiple variety of mixes and amalgamations evident across the whole range of genres, both new and old, that makes this period of literary transition so worthy of further exploration.

Turning now to the internal aspect of literature we will see that the three basic features of traditional literature, monism (monocentricity), canonicity and traditionalism (in the narrow sense) are all evident to varying degrees in most of the texts discussed. The idea of the Supreme Authority is certainly evident in texts such as *Syair perang Inggeris di Betawi* and *Hikayat Pahang* where the role of Allah in determining events, and also in determining what is right and proper, is obvious. So too, the importance of canonicity is evident in those works which seek the correct application of law according to traditional ideas. In *Hikayat Nakhoda Muda* for example, in presenting his reasons for leaving Semangka, Lauddin described the transgressions of his sultan in terms clearly owing much to the traditional Malay contract between ruler and ruled. But we also see canonicity impacting on the works of Abdullah, a writer who has been hailed as modern by many critics. Abdullah advised Malay rulers to consult *Tajus salatin*, a text that discussed notions of right and proper behaviour of rulers, princes, officials and many other members of society. So too he absorbed and incorporated past literary traditions and ideas into his own writing. Also, Abdullah's frequent interruptions in the narrative, in order to offer his advice and to draw moral conclusions so didactic in tone, are in full accordance with ideas of traditionalism.

Nonetheless, modern ideas of individualism, pluralism (polycentrism), relativism and innovation are also evident, though generally to a lesser degree, in many of the texts discussed. Those texts exhibiting the strongest evidence of dialogue with the British also show the strongest manifestations of these modern features. Although many traditional features are to be found in *Hikayat Abdullah,* Abdullah's

dialogue with the West regarding systems of justice exemplifies a more pluralistic perspective. This observation is tempered by the fact that in championing something new Abdullah is often inclined to completely reject the old view, without much evidence of relativistic deliberation. Nonetheless his urging of his countrymen to engage with ideas, and in particular technology, linked with the British, is clearly a manifestation of a strengthening of innovation over traditionalism. A further example of engagement with the 'other', as a result of an increasingly pluralistic outlook, is to be seen in Na Tian Piet's eulogy to Sultan Abu Bakar. While on the one hand his language is highly formulaic, he nonetheless engages with the new foreign activities enjoyed by the Sultan.

Certain Malay authors developed their own individualistic views of the British in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Tuan Simi saw the British as not meeting their obligations regarding justice and exploiting workers through the culture of low pay. Abdullah differentiated between different British administrators. He was very sympathetic towards Butterworth and Raffles, but was fairly critical of Crawfurd. Al-Misri was critical of Crawfurd and Raffles, though at other times he stressed the positive nature of British rule. Na Tian Piet was particularly enthusiastic about the British teacher Keasberry noting the specific contribution he made to education in the region. Not only did these writers begin to portray aspects of the individuality of British characters, but so too the stances taken by writers became more diverse and can be seen as evidence of a more individualistic approach to authorship.

Thus in considering these internal aspects we can see that while traditional ideas of the right and proper remain strong, from another perspective, authors have been successful, albeit to varying degrees, in writing from a more individualistic viewpoint. They have allowed the existence of other systems of beliefs and frames of reference to affect their worldview. Hence convention is overcome to an extent by realism. Communal ideas are overcome to an extent by individual ideas and monistic authoritarianism is overcome to an extent by early manifestations of relativism.

Having discussed some of the main features of the transition from the traditional to the modern literary epoch, it seems to be useful to look again at the 'jubilee texts' as complex nature of literary activity, and the disparate motivations and influences that affected writers is reflected in this small group of texts. Those texts that celebrate the jubilees of Queen Victoria, and the coronation and jubilee of King George V are bound together by the fact that they were written with the idea of celebrating important events in the reigns of British monarchs. They were all produced between the late 1880s and the 1930's. However here the commonalities end, for while one of those texts was written as a manuscript the remainder were printed (some lithographically, others typographically). The *Jubilee Address by Perak penghulus* and *the Jubilee Address by Perak raiyats* were orally delivered but published in the typographically printed *Journal of the Straits Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*. So too the *Syair Kuin 50 Tahun Jubili* was orally delivered but published as a lithograph. Tuan de Vries's text was published in both Jawi and Rumi letters. Thus in this small group of texts, we see the complex nature of the contemporary situation regarding the production and disseminating of literature.

The complexity does not end there however. For while the poem celebrating Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee (SOAS MS 46944), *Syair Kuin 50 Tahun Jubili* and the *Perak Addresses* contain many traditional elements in terms of their eulogistic style and use of traditional formulae and convention, other works have much more modern content. *Shaer Intan Jubilee,* written by the European Tuan H.A. de Vries takes the celebrations that were held in Singapore as the main focus of his poem, though something of the monarch's attributes are also recorded in a eulogistic style. We also see a more journalistic style in the latter part of *Syair Kuin 50 Tahun Jubili*, when the celebrations held in Melaka are described. This waning of traditional elements is still further evident in *Syair King George yang ke-5,* a poem that hardly mentions King George V or any of his qualities, as would be expected according to traditional convention. Rather, this topical poem uses a realistic style to record details of the celebrations held in Penang. However it is in the *Hikayat perihal keramain ... Silber Jubili King George ke-5,* published in 1935, that we see the real shift to journalistic style of presentation. In this text not only are the events of the celebration recorded in a matter-of-fact manner, though still in Jawi letters, but also photographs

supplement the prose text. Thus technological advances are used to confirm more convincingly the reality of the events depicted.

The comparison of the 'jubilee texts' highlights the diversity of factors that are of interest in our understanding of the process of transition. In the vast majority of texts discussed in this thesis we can see evidence of both traditional and modern literary features, though generally it is still the traditional features that are to the fore. Continuity is dominant over change. It is the existence of modern elements amid predominantly traditional elements that suggest the usefulness of the conception of the transitional period. We should note, however, that this coexistence of traditional and modern elements does not seem to lend itself to be termed a 'synthesis', as for example has been the case in Malay literature after the coming of Islam to the Malay world (see, for instance, Braginsky, 1993: 63-72). Unlike that previous encounter of two traditional cultures/literatures, the encounter with the British was a meeting of a traditional with a modern culture/literature. Traditional and modern features existed side-by-side in the texts discussed in this thesis, with traditional features gradually being replaced by modern ones. For this reason it is perhaps more useful to think of the transition at that early stage as an aggregate or an amalgam of traditional and modern features.

The discussion of the conception of the transitional period has highlighted the need for further exploration. Needless to say this thesis has focussed on only one specific group of texts, and the whole body of literature produced during this period in the Malay world needs to be systematically studied for its clearer understanding. Firstly, more attention should be turned to the corpus of early printed books, taking note of the differentiation between lithograph and typograph and their relationships with the manuscript tradition. The location of such production, and in particular geographical peculiarities in terms of subject matter of printed texts, may also be a useful path of enquiry. Secondly, while attention has already been paid to the influence of both European and Asian literatures on Malay writing in the early twentieth century, further study is still needed regarding the impact of European journalism and non-fiction publications on literary activity in the Malay world from the nineteenth century onwards. Thirdly, this study has certainly given strength to the

argument that there was nothing uniform about the transformations that occurred during the transitional period. It was a period that saw the coming into being of certain genres and the demise of others. Undoubtedly there were cross influences between these genres that need to be considered. So too further consideration should be given to the idea that there were literary genres and forms unique to the transitional period. To an extent the topical texts might be understood in such a light, though with the acknowledgement that they represent a particular manifestation of early journalistic writing and reportage. Fourthly, Ras argued that certain writers were peripheral because of their position in society, and in particular because of their ethnic origin. Ras raised an important point, but perhaps he looked at it from the wrong perspective. Rather it seems that we should be asking why so many writers of traditional and even transitional Malay literature came from non-Malay backgrounds. Perhaps because they were not so firmly entrenched within Malay society, they were more able to play the role of cultural intermediaries.

Finally, rather than talking of a 'transition', perhaps it is time instead to define and further expand upon our understanding of the variety of 'transitions' that occurred in the traditional-modern literary amalgamation. These developments were highly complex and such a change in terminology would certainly remove the need for criticism on the grounds of simplification of the process. What is more, it would allow for a more nuanced and detailed description of the multi-faceted nature of the aggregation that took place during the period form the late eighteenth to the early or even the mid- twentieth century.

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